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ABSTRACT

Written for parents, this workbook provides easy-to-read information about tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs, along with step-by-step instructions for activities that promote family interaction. The first part of the book contains general information for parents about developing the kind of family bonding and harmony that lead to enhanced self-esteem in the children and lessens their chances of getting into trouble with drugs. Included in this section are practice sheets for parents to use in developing the skills described. The second part of the workbook provides information about important skills that can best be developed in a family setting. In this section are activity sheets designed for children from preschool through high school age. Individual chapters focus on: (1) strengthening family bonds through family sharing circles, family meetings, and learning how to praise one's children; (2) creating family policies and developing workable rules; (3) developing essential life skills by helping one's children learn to make decisions, solve problems, set goals, and say "no"; (4) learning about tobacco, alcohol and other drugs; and (5) family fun involving everyone. The chapter on tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs includes a list of resources to call or write for further information. The chapter on family fun highlights the value of reading and includes lists of books related to a variety of topics that promote positive attitudes and healthy life choices. (NB)

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FAMILY CONNECTIONS

Teaching your children the skills of Self-Esteem and Drug Prevention

Sandy Schuster and Susanna Palomares

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FAMILY CONNECTIONS

Teaching Your Children the Skills of Self-Esteem and Drug Prevention

Sandy Schuster and Susanna Palomares

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Acknowledgment

Occasionally, a group of people comes together to produce something of great significance. This is what has happened in the development of ***Family Connections.*** We would like to thank all those who have contributed ideas and time to this effort. In particular, we would like to thank Dianne Schilling, whose editing takes the rough edges off so much of what we do, and David Cowan, whose insights, ideas, and design skills are reflected throughout this book.

We offer one final "thank you" to our friends all around the country who have generously shared with us so much that is expressed in ***Family Connections***, and to the parents of those children who have been, or will be, influenced by what is offered here.

The Authors

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Introducing Family Connections

Everyone acknowledges the vital role parents play in the growth and development of children. Education, business, and government all point to the need for parents to be involved in the education of children. Today, we have come to understand that this role extends to several important areas of learning. We have also come to realize that families provide the context for many lessons that are not taught in schools, but that serve us throughout our lives. Because of this, parents are a critical component in each child's education and the family is the teaching center for some of the most important things we learn.

Being aware of the importance of one's role as a parent and family member is not enough. Parenting is a challenge that causes all parents, however much they want to succeed, to occasionally feel ill-equipped and frustrated. As a society, we do little to train parents for the awesome task of raising children and we supply few resources to give them a helping hand. ***Family Connections*** has been created as such a resource. If you are a parent, this book is a tool to help you reach beyond your desire to be good and effective in your role. ***Family Connections*** puts in your hands facts, ideas, and activities that help you create and take advantage of the "teachable moments" in the lives of your children.

Experience has shown that there are specific things children need to learn that positively influence their self-esteem and equip them to avoid such hazards as tobacco, alcohol and other drugs. Research has demonstrated that when deficiencies exist in the development of these life skills, children are at risk. On the other hand, children with well-developed life skills perform at higher levels and their self-esteem is enhanced. Sadly, these skills are NOT widely taught in our schools. They have been left largely to parents—*to you.*

Family Connections is a simple and engaging collection of facts, concepts, and activities designed for use by you and your children within the context of the family. It helps you build life skills, strengthen family bonds, and create the policies and rules that are so important to family management. With ***Family Connections***, you'll be actively engaged in drug-abuse prevention within the walls of your own home.

Family Connections accomplishes all of this by using some of the most effective methods available to promote learning and by building on the positive things that you as a parent *already do* to foster positive growth in your children. ***Family Connections*** supplies a wide variety of alternative activities, behaviors, and skills that you can adapt to the unique qualities of your family and children—in a setting that fosters love and family fun.

How to Use This Book—A Note to Parents

This book has two parts. Pages 1 through 50, contain general information about developing family bonding and harmony. Also included are practice sheets for you to use in developing the skills you are reading about.

Pages 51 through 122, provide information about important skills that can best be developed in a family setting. Here you will find activity sheets for your children. These activity sheets provide ways for each child to be involved in and learn the skills you'll be reading about. In each section there are activity sheets that have been designed for children of different ages. There are activities for children from pre-school through high school. As you review the activity sheets, you can select those that are best for each of your children.

Please feel free to make copies of these activity sheets so that you have the right number for your children.

1

Strengthening Family Bonds

Through open and honest family communication and bonding, you can do a great deal to enhance the self-esteem of your children and lessen the chances of their getting into trouble with drugs. Research shows that children feel better about themselves and are less likely to use drugs if they have strong bonds with their families. One of the most effective ways to develop and enhance family bonding is to participate in Family Sharing Circles and to conduct Family Meetings on a regular basis.

Family Sharing Circles

A Family Sharing Circle provides an excellent vehicle for enhancing the level of communication you have with your children. Family members learn more about one another, and you have an opportunity to help your children develop a realistic self-concept and positive self-esteem.

A Family Sharing Circle is a time when the whole family gets together and voluntarily shares feelings and experiences as they relate to a specific topic. It's called a sharing circle because one of the best ways to have a talk with everyone participating equally is in a circle, where everyone is permitted to talk and listen without interference. In a sharing circle, all family members can share their feelings in safety, without being interrupted, criticized, or put down. It's also a time for each family member to practice good listening.

The ground rules for the Family Sharing Circle were developed to guarantee that each family member is listened to by all the other members—something which doesn't always happen in the course of our busy day-to-day existence. Really listening to children is a powerful way to let them know you care. Nothing says "I love and respect you" more clearly than taking the time to listen—just listen, without judging.

Three elements make a Family Sharing Circle a distinctive and rewarding experience.

1. The ground rules
2. The steps for leading a sharing circle
3. The topic for discussion

Ground Rules of the Family Sharing Circle

As you read over the ground rules, you'll see that they can all be considered elements of good communication. In the Family Sharing Circle, each rule is important and must be followed if you are to create positive results.

When you begin to do sharing circles as a family, it's a good idea to review and discuss the rules until everyone understands the process and remembers to follow the rules. You may find it helpful to open this book to the next page and display the Family Sharing Circle Ground Rules so that your family can read the rules as you go over them.

It's always helpful to understand why we have the rules that we do. There are important reasons for each Family Sharing Circle Ground Rule:

Rule 1—Bring yourself to the circle and nothing else.

This rule helps to eliminate distractions and ensure focus on the circle topic.

Rule 2—Everyone gets an opportunity to share, including the leader.

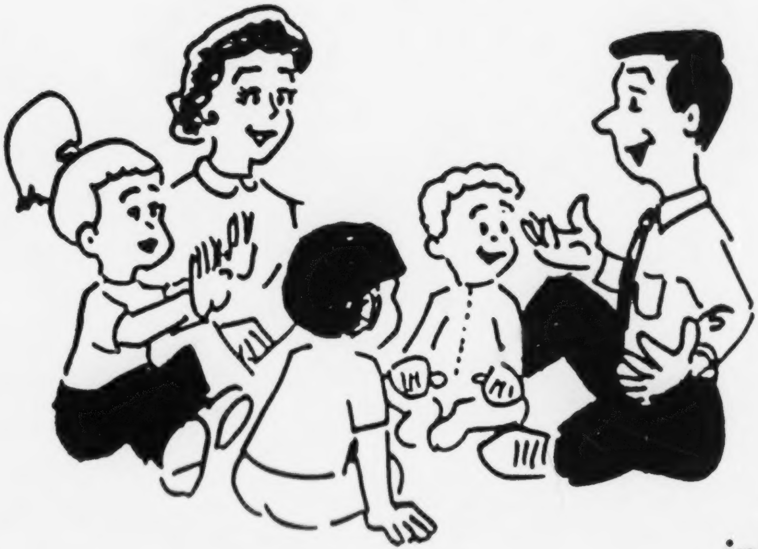
Communication is a two-way street. So even if you're the leader, you become a real part of the circle when you take your turn to share. Once everyone understands how a circle functions, the leadership role can be played by a child as well as a parent.

Rule 3—You can skip your turn if you wish.

Creating a feeling of safety is very important. No one should feel compelled to speak to a particular topic if he or she doesn't want to. Everyone is participating by simply being in the circle.

Family Sharing Circle Ground Rules

1. Bring yourself to the circle and nothing else.
2. Everyone gets an opportunity to share, including the leader.
3. You can skip your turn if you wish.
4. Listen to the person who is speaking.
5. There are no interruptions, probing, or put-downs.
6. Share the time equally.
7. What is said in the circle stays in the circle.



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Rule 4—Listen to the person who is speaking.

This rule provides an opportunity for the leader to model good nonverbal listening skills, such as maintaining appropriate eye contact, smiling, nodding, leaning forward, and otherwise acknowledging the person who is sharing. Everyone feels more valued when listened to.

Rule 5—There are no interruptions, probing, put-downs, or gossip.

Good listening and good manners preclude interrupting someone who is speaking. Often, adults interrupt children, which tends to undermine the building of strong self-esteem by suggesting that what adults have to say is much more important than what children have to say. Probing is asking questions about the experience or feelings being shared. Probing is almost always unnecessary and is often threatening. Allow your children to share as much of their experience as they are comfortable sharing. Although put-downs are popular in television situation comedies and on playgrounds, they are lethal to good communication. Put-downs make people feel inadequate and embarrassed. They should be discouraged whenever they occur, and must not be allowed in the Family Sharing Circle.

Rule 6—Share the time equally.

This rule guarantees that one person doesn't monopolize all the allotted time. This is especially important if one member of the family is extremely verbal and another quiet. Everyone must have the opportunity to participate equally in the process. Plan to allow 3 or 4 minutes for each person during the sharing phase of the circle. If more time is necessary, use your own judgement. Be sure to review this rule carefully with everyone, especially young children, so that all participants know that they have a time limit, and are prepared to avoid using too much time.

Rule 7—What is said in the circle stays in the circle.

It is important not to use something a child has shared in the circle to scold or punish him or her. If consequences of this nature occur, they will cause the child to avoid sharing in the future or to share only surface information in order to feel safe.

Steps in Leading a Family Sharing Circle

The next element that distinguishes a Family Sharing Circle is the procedure for leading the circle. The procedure consists of steps that the leader of the circle follows in order to ensure that the process has structure and runs smoothly. They are as follows:

Step 1—Set up the Family Sharing Circle.

This simply means gathering the family together, sitting in a circle, and making everyone feel welcome. First and foremost, you want to establish a positive atmosphere. So, in a relaxed manner, make eye contact and smile at each person, welcoming everyone to the circle.

Step 2—Go over the ground rules.

Especially during the first few circles and at appropriate intervals thereafter, go over the ground rules for the Family Sharing Circle so everyone understands what they are and is prepared to keep them in mind during the circle.

Step 3—Introduce the topic (You'll read more about this in the next few pages).

Select a discussion topic and tell the family what the topic is. Then elaborate a bit on the topic to give each circle member a clear understanding of how you interpret it, and to allow them an opportunity to think in broader terms about what the topic may mean to them. When you have completed your elaboration, restate the topic to make sure everyone knows exactly what it is. Finally, suggest that everyone take a few moments and think about what he or she would like to share.

Step 4—Give each person a chance to talk.

The Family Sharing Circle offers family members, including the leader, an opportunity to express themselves and be accepted for the experiences, thoughts, and feelings shared in the circle. Simply allow each person to share what he or she has to say without interruption or probing.

Step 5—Guide the summary discussion.

During the summary discussion, members are given an opportunity to think about and talk about what has been shared in the circle. During this part of the circle, the leader asks thought-provoking questions to stimulate free discussion. Through this discussion, members bring meaning to or draw conclusions from any ideas or concepts that were introduced during the sharing phase. Use this time to underscore ideas, values, and thoughts that you want your children to understand and remember. Use it too, to promote in your children the development of higher-level thinking as they consider their responses.

The summary discussion meets the need of people of all ages to find meaning in what they have done. Consequently, the summary serves as a necessary culmination to each circle session.

Step 6—Close the Family Sharing Circle.

The ideal time to end a Family Sharing Circle is when the summary discussion reaches natural closure. You will soon learn to recognize this juncture as the moment when no one has anything further to contribute, or when the discussion moves away from the summary questions that were asked by the leader. Thank everyone for participating in the circle. Then close the circle by saying, "The circle session is over" or "The circle is closed" or "That ends our circle" or words to that effect.

As an adult family member, it's a good idea for you to take the responsibility of leading Family Sharing Circles in the beginning. If you have young children, you may find that the circle works best if the leader is always an adult. However, if your children are eight and older, we encourage you to develop their leadership skills by allowing them to lead circles as often as they are willing. It's good practice for them. Sometimes even younger children make effective leaders. You know your children and will recognize when they are ready to lead. With a little coaching from you, everyone can take turns in the leadership role.

Family Sharing Circle Topics

The third and final element that makes a Family Sharing Circle a unique experience is the topic for discussion. As you read the third step in leading a Family Sharing Circle, you were introduced to the concept of the discussion topic. In addition to rules and steps, a sharing circle ***ALWAYS*** has a specific topic. A circle is not a free-form discussion , but a time for each family member to talk to a specific topic.

The following topics are divided into three categories: Self-Awareness, Personal Development, and Social Relationships. It is possible to effect positive growth in the emotional and social development of children when they are young by providing opportunities to explore three critical areas of human functioning: awareness (of feelings, thoughts, and the behavior); social relations (how individuals get along with each other); and self-esteem (how individuals perceive their worth and worthiness). From these areas, we have developed the three categories of Awareness, Personal Development, and Social Relationships. As family members discuss the topics and relate to each other verbally in the Family Sharing Circle, they learn about each other, develop good listening habits, practice basic communication skills, and enjoy positive experiences that help them grow in awareness, learn more effective modes of social interaction, and feel more masterful and self-confident. Thus, Family Sharing Circles develop, maintain, and enhance important life skills.

Self-Awareness Topics

The first group of circle topics relates to Awareness—a critical element of self-esteem. Awareness enables us to be in touch with our feelings and thoughts, and be in control of our actions. Aware people are clear about the reality of the past, the possibilities of the future, and the certainty of the present, and can order their lives flexibly and effectively on a moment-to-moment basis.

Awareness topics assist the family to experience and discuss perceptions, ideas, experiences, and emotions in an accepting and non-threatening atmosphere. Children discover that feelings are not right or wrong, good or bad—they simply are. Here is a list of Self-Awareness discussion topics:

Something that Makes Me Especially Happy
Someone Whose Friendship I Value
A Time I Had to Make a Choice
Something About Me You Wouldn't Know Unless I Told You
Something I Like About Myself
Something I'm Good At
Something I'd Like to Do Better
Something That Makes Me Feel Good
I Felt Good and Bad About the Same Thing
A Time Someone's Feelings Surprised Me
Someone Who Respects My Feelings
A Favorite Thing I Do with My Family
One of My Favorite Relatives
One of My Favorite Family Traditions
Something I Created
A Talent I'd Like to Develop
Something I Do to Take Care of My Body
The Best Thing About Me Physically Is
Something That Really Made Me Angry
A Time I Was Scared

Personal Development Topics

Themes in the area of Personal Development make up the second group of Family Sharing Circle discussion topics. In these circles, participants are encouraged to explore their efforts and accept positive feedback concerning their successes. Your children need to hear you recognize their progress and comment positively on their accomplishments. Your support is important to them.

Personal Development topics are designed to increase children's awareness of their successes. By focusing on positive behaviors and accomplishments, children recognize the rewards that can be gained by behaving responsibly. These topics focus on helping children take pride in their accomplishments, deal rationally with disappointments and problems, and make workable decisions. When we are self-confident, we believe in ourselves and perceive ourselves as being "okay." Healthy self-esteem and a feeling of mastery or self-confidence allow us to try new challenges undaunted by the fear of failure. It is highly likely that when we have a feeling of mastery about ourselves, we accomplish more. Success fosters more success, which generates a beneficial cycle.

Failure is a reality that is also examined, but as a way of seeing that mistakes (or failure) is a common, universal experience and that it need not hold us back; indeed, we can learn from our failures and they can contribute to our growth. Here is a list of Personal Development topics:

A Way in Which I'm Responsible
I Admitted That I Did It
A School Rule I Appreciate
A Family Rule I Appreciate
Something I Did to Improve the Environment
Something I Chose That Made Me Happy
A Hard Choice I Had to Make
A Job I'd Like to Have
If I Owned My Own Business
Something I Accomplished That Really Pleased Me
Something I Did (or Made) That I'm Proud Of
Something I'd Do If I Knew I Couldn't Fail
I Made a Plan and Followed Through
Something I Did for Myself When I Was Sick
A Time I Didn't Take Care of Myself and Paid the Price
Something That Causes Me Stress
What I Do When the Going Gets Tough
A Time I Said No
A Time I Wish I Had Said No

Social Relationship Topics

The final group of discussion topics addresses the area of Social Relationships. Effective interpersonal skills enable us to understand other people, and to interact with others flexibly, skillfully, and responsibly, without sacrificing our own needs and integrity. It's important that children become aware not only of how others affect them, but of the effect *their* behavior has on friends and family members, and that they take responsibility for their actions.

Without skills in social interaction, children can confuse situations and give inappropriate responses. They lack positive communication skills and are unaware of how their actions affect others. Our children deal with other people every day—their peers and significant adults. They need positive interpersonal experiences and information in the social realm in order to offset prior difficulties and build healthy relationships. With the following topics, the family has the opportunity to discuss what goes into a relationship that makes it friendly, caring, and trusting. By discussing these topics, children can explore problem areas and gain experience in how people should ultimately behave. This then is the list of Social Relationship topics:

Someone I Like to Talk With
A Time I Listened Well to Someone
A Time I Knew I Could Do It
I Succeeded Because I Encouraged Myself
Someone Didn't Say a Word, But I Knew How She or He Felt
A Way I Show Respect for Others
A Friend of Mine Who Is Different From Me
Something I Like About One of My Best Friends
Something I Do to Keep a Friend
I Almost Got Into a Fight
I Helped Someone Who Needed and Wanted My Help
I Got Some Help I Didn't Want
A Time I Came Through for the Group
A Time Someone Ruined It for Everyone
A Time I Went Along with the Group
A Time I Resisted Peer Pressure

A Sample Family Sharing Circle

Read through this example to see how a leader handles a typical Family Sharing Circle.

Topic: "One of the Best Things That Ever Happened to Me"

Step 1—Set up the Family Sharing Circle.

Gather the family together in a quiet place and seat yourselves in a circle. Thank everyone for joining you in the circle and tell them, "This time together is called a Family Sharing Circle, and it's a time to come together as a family to share and listen to each other."

Step 2—Go over the ground rules

Tell everyone: "Since this is our first Family Sharing Circle, we need to have some ground rules to make sure it goes well." Discuss each of the rules in a friendly way. Make sure each member understands what each rule means. Get everyone's agreement to follow the rules.

Step 3—Introduce the topic

Say: "Our topic for the sharing circle is 'One of the Best Things That Ever Happened to Me.'" As an elaboration, say something like: "Can you think of something good that happened to you that you'd feel okay telling us about? It doesn't have to be a big event, just something that made you feel good inside. It may have happened some time ago or perhaps it was very recent. Let's take a few silent moments to think it over. The topic is, 'One of the Best Things That Ever Happened to Me.'"

Step 4—Give each person a chance to talk

Invite each family member to take a turn sharing. Listen carefully to each person and guide everyone else to do the same. Don't allow negative interruptions. Model positive listening. Be sure to take a turn yourself.

Step 5—Guide the summary discussion

After all family members who want to speak have done so, encourage a free flowing discussion by asking the family one or two questions such as these:

> *What good does it do to tell each other happy memories?*
>
> *Did you find out anything new or interesting about anyone in the family?*

Step 6—Close the Family Sharing Circle

This is simply a brief acknowledgment that the circle is over. Simply thank everyone for participating and explain that the circle has concluded.

What is a Good Listener?

1. A good listener shows an interest in what the speaker is saying.
2. A good listener doesn't interrupt the speaker.
3. Good listeners think about what the speaker is saying not what they are going to say next.
4. Good listeners try to stand in the speaker's shoes. They know that the speaker's feelings matter.
5. Good listeners are patient. They know that listening is faster than talking so they don't jump ahead of the speaker. They give the speaker time.
6. Good listeners look for areas of agreement, and not grounds for argument.
7. Good listeners clarify what they have heard before launching into what they have to say.

Family Meetings

Another effective way to strengthen family understanding and communication is by holding Family Meetings. Family Meetings differ from Family Sharing Circles in that meetings are more casual and less structured. Sharing circles ***ALWAYS*** have a predetermined topic of discussion and follow specific steps. Beyond enhancing the bonds of the family, the goals of the Family Sharing Circle are to develop awareness of self, understanding of others, listening and language skills, and self-esteem. Family Meetings serve a different set of purposes. They provide a time and a place where family members can discuss matters of interest, work on family problems, or plan family projects and events. Family Meetings are a good place to air concerns, solve problems, review activities and schedules of family members, plan celebrations, and assign work and chores. Family Meetings also provide opportunities to give your children accurate information about alcohol and other drugs. The important thing is that Family Meetings provide an opportunity for all members to be involved in family decisions, planning, and in dealing with sensitive issues.

Whether you use a Family Meeting just to share time together or to deal with a serious family problem, there are a few things that will ensure success. As with any meeting, the first thing to remember is to have a specific reason for getting together. Even if the reason is simply to talk about something of interest, you need to do some planning beforehand. This planning includes putting together an agenda. An agenda will give just enough structure to your Family Meeting to ensure a productive process. An agenda also lets everyone know why you're getting together. The more specific your reason for having the meeting, the more you need to think about how you want the meeting to go and just what areas you want to cover. A little time spent in planning before you get together will pay big dividends in the quality and outcome of your Family Meeting.

A great way to get started with Family Meetings is to use the first one to plan a fun event together. Before the meeting, think about some possible events and who might do what in carrying out these events.

Have some ideas in mind that you can use to generate discussion and promote participation. Remember, for almost every family today, quality time together is at a premium. Family Meetings add real value to the time you do have.

Ground Rules and Guidelines for Family Meetings

In order to run smoothly, Family Meetings need to have some ground rules and guidelines similar to those for the Family Sharing Circle. As a family, you may want to agree on additional rules, but these basic guidelines will provide the structure needed to have successful Family Meetings:

1. Everyone gets a chance to talk without interruption.
2. Everyone can share how he or she feels—there are no right or wrong feelings.
3. Everyone listens, but doesn't have to talk.
4. Everyone is considerate and doesn't put down anyone (including himself or herself).

These are the rules for Family Meetings. As you can see, they are not as structured as those for the Family Sharing Circle, but they are structured enough to ensure that order and mutual consideration prevail. Next is a list of some ideas that will help the Family Meeting run smoothly. These are the guidelines:

1. Try to have a Family Meeting about once a week.
2. Family Meetings should last about 30 to 45 minutes.
3. Make sure everyone understands the basic ground rules and agrees to follow them.
4. In concluding each Family Meeting, review what you have discussed and agreed upon as a family.
5. Set a time for your next Family Meeting.
6. End the meeting on a relaxed and happy note. A nice way to do this is to enjoy some special treat together.

How to Praise Your Children

One of the beliefs shared by the authors and promoted throughout this book is that all children should be treated with great respect and dignity, and know they are loved and accepted just as they are. When children live in an environment that supports these ideals, they are able to develop the positive belief in themselves (self-esteem) that will put them on the road to becoming happy, well-adjusted, productive, and responsible adults.

There are many ways that you can help your children learn more about themselves and learn to like themselves. Giving your children positive, constructive praise is an excellent way to help them recognize their strengths, learn what they are doing that is effective, and feel good about themselves. These reasons for using praise probably seem fairly obvious to you; however, there is one thing about praise that you may not know. Praise can be destructive as well as constructive.

Evaluative (Destructive) Praise

Evaluative praise is often given with good intentions, but the long-term effects are frequently destructive rather than constructive. Evaluative praise makes a judgement. When we say things like, "Great job!," or, "What a good boy you are," we may temporarily make a child feel good, but over time create a sense of dependency on the praise. Children may develop the belief that they must always get this kind of praise in order to feel approved of. They may start to believe that good feelings and self-worth come from outside, in the form of judgements they receive from others—the "good job," the "'A' paper," and the "contest won," rather than from an internal belief in their self-worth and lovability. This tends to lock children into needing approval of their actions by others in order to experience a sense of worth. It stands in the way of children being able to develop a sense of personal self-worth that permits them to acknowledge and feel good about their own actions.

Descriptive and Appreciative (Constructive) Praise

There is another type of praise that can be beneficial and growth-producing to your child and is just as warm and enjoyable to give. It is descriptive and appreciative praise. There are really two parts to this effective way of praising your child.

The first part, descriptive praise, describes rather than evaluates or judges. If your son has cleaned his room particularly well, instead of saying, "Great job!," or "What a good boy you are!" say, "Your room is really clean. You have put all your toys away where they belong and made your bed very neatly."

The second part, appreciative praise, often follows descriptive praise and is a way of showing your appreciation to the child. So to the descriptive statement above you may add something like, "I really appreciate your help in cleaning up your room. Thank you."

Descriptive and appreciative praise allows the child to come to his or her own conclusions about the praise. It builds self-esteem by allowing your child to think, "I am a helpful person," or "I am a good worker." By keeping the focus on the act and not the actor, the child learns that he or she is ALWAYS okay.

With descriptive, appreciative praise, your child will likely develop many positive beliefs about his or her ability. So strive to give your child praise each day in as many different areas as you can. Think of several things your child has done that you could specifically comment on. Sample areas might be attitude, physical appearance, habits, helpfulness, thoughtfulness, skill, etc. (It is especially helpful to find things to sincerely praise about a child's weakest area to help improve performance in that area.) So often, it is easy for us as parents to find things to criticize in the actions of our children. We call this catching them doing something "wrong." With descriptive and appreciative praise, you catch your children doing something "right."

It may take some thinking and practice before you phrase your praise in descriptive and appreciative terms. Use the practice sheet on the next page to write out some positive praise statements you could say to your children. Since evaluative, or destructive, praise is the type most often given, you've probably had lots of practice with that type of praise. Take some time to get used to stating your praise in a different way. By writing down several descriptive, appreciative praise statements and then saying them to your children, you'll be helping yourself to remember a better way to praise your child from now on. With attention and practice, this will become a praise habit that will not only help your children grow, but will teach them, by your example, the best way to offer praise to the people in their lives.

Praise Your Child

Practice Sheet

Child's Name ______________________________

Descriptive Praise:	**Appreciative Praise:**
______________________	______________________
______________________	______________________
______________________	______________________
Descriptive Praise:	**Appreciative Praise:**
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______________________	______________________
Descriptive Praise:	**Appreciative Praise:**
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Child's Name ______________________________

Descriptive Praise:	**Appreciative Praise:**
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Descriptive Praise:	**Appreciative Praise:**
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______________________	______________________
______________________	______________________
Descriptive Praise:	**Appreciative Praise:**
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Use additional paper or make copies of this sheet for your other children.

The Strength Bombardment

Learning to give and receive praise and compliments is a skill that is learned. Like any skill, it takes practice. Conducting a Strength Bombardment with your family offers excellent practice and creates lots of good feelings in the process.

A Strength Bombardment is sharing positive messages with and about people we care for and it's a good way to practice giving specific compliments and praise. The use of praise in Strength Bombardments brings families closer together. Whenever we praise someone's strengths or behaviors or qualities, we are giving them incentives to repeat it. When we feel good about something, we want to do it again. So, the more good things we share as a family, the closer we come together. We enhance relationships whenever we praise, accept, love, or listen. We diminish our family strength when we criticize, ignore, tease, or reject. A Strength Bombardment enhances rather than diminishes. This is a good way to open or end a Family Sharing Circle or Family Meeting.

Here are the guidelines for conducting a Strength Bombardment:

1. Family members sit or stand in a circle so that they can see one another.
2. Choose someone to begin, and have that person turn to the person on his or her left and say: "Something I appreciate about you is . . ."

Examples:

"Something I appreciate about you is that you always have a smile or a hug for me."

"Something I appreciate about you is that you give me a chance to say what's bothering me without telling me what to do."

3. The receiving family member says, "Thank you."
4. Then the family member who has just received and acknowledged the appreciation turns to the family member on his or her left and does the same.
5. Keep moving around the circle until everyone has given, received, and acknowledged a positive statement.
6. Finish off with individual hugs or a large family group hug.

ESTEEM BUILDING SKILLS

Skill 1: *Give lots of praise, for effort as well as accomplishment.*

Look for achievement, even in small tasks, and praise your child often. Also let your child know that trying hard is even more important than winning.

Skill 2: *Help your child set realistic goals.*

If the child, or the parent, expects too much, the resulting failure can be a crushing blow. Your child may not know that his or her personal best can make you just as proud as a blue ribbon.

Skill 3: *When correcting, criticize the action, not the child.*

Helpful Example: "Climbing that fence was dangerous. You could have been hurt, so don't do it again." Hurtful Example: "You shouldn't have climbed that fence. Don't you have any sense?"

Skill 4: *Give your child real responsibility.*

Children who have regular duties around the house learn to see themselves as a valuable part of a team, and completing their duties instills a sense of accomplishment.

Skill 5: *Show your children you love them.*

Hugs, kisses, and saying, "I love you" help your child feel good about him- or herself. Children are never too old to be told that they are loved and highly valued. And contrary to popular belief, single-parent families can give children the same basis for self-esteem as two-parent families, as long as the parent-child relationship is strong and loving.

Some possible variations:

"Something I admire about you is . . ."

"Something I respect about you is . . ."

"Something I enjoy about you is . . ."

Here are some things to remember as you are doing a Strength Bombardment:

1. Keep all statements positive. Don't allow any put-downs—even joking put-downs.
2. Make sure the person receiving the praise accepts it. All the person should say in response is a simple, "Thank you." Don't allow him or her to deny or diminish the compliment or praise just received.

A Word about Put-Downs

In this section we've been talking about several communication processes that you can do as a family. They all involve sharing, listening, and giving and receiving positive strokes and feedback. Obviously there is no place in any of this for negativity or put-downs. Words have great power. Even words said in jest have powerful influence. Sometimes the effects aren't immediately realized, but over time they can make a child feel good about him or herself, or create a negative belief about personal worth.

Put-downs are ***ALWAYS*** destructive to a child's developing self-concept. Our culture seems to have developed a propensity for put-downs—both of others and ourselves. They have become a popular ingredient in our everyday ways of communicating. Most television programs and commercials employ put-downs by using sarcasm and wise-cracking as their basis for humor. This legitimizes the use of put-downs and conveys to children and adults that they are acceptable ways to relate to others. In this regard television does tremendous damage to our young people. Children need to understand that sarcasm, wise cracks, and put-downs are not the way to establish or maintain happy, healthy relationships. They need positive models of effective communication. Speak to your children in loving, positive terms and under no circumstances allow put-downs to have a place in Family Sharing Circles, Family Meetings, and Strength Bombardments.

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Creating Family Policies and Developing Workable Rules

We live in a world where people govern their lives by making and observing rules. Some of these rules are well defined and are written into the laws of society. Others are not so formal, but just as important in our lives. These include our codes of behavior and mutual respect; they also include various principles and values that we have adopted. Whether formal or informal, the rules we use to govern our lives are the product of a very simple process that we are going to explore.

As parents, we observe rules in our adult life because they help us to be successful and happy. In turn, we want success and happiness for each of our children and this is just where the process that results in workable family rules begins—in what we hope and dream for our children .

Here are the steps in this process as they relate to creating useful family policies and establishing effective rules for children so that they can successfully govern their lives:

1. Identify and write down the hopes and dreams you have for each of your children.
2. Convert your hopes and dreams into expectations for each child.
3. Determine with your family the policies that will support the realization or achievement of these expectations.
4. Create workable rules as guidelines to help your children adhere to your family policies.
5. Determine the consequences associated with the rules you've developed.
6. Regularly review your expectations, policies, rules, and consequences to make sure that they are working and continue to be appropriate and supportive of your hopes and dreams.

As you can see, each step in the process builds on the one before it. From our hopes and dreams we build expectations. Using our expectations as guides, we determine policies for our family. We create rules to define the limits of our policies, and then we structure consequences to use in enforcing our rules. Finally, we regularly review everything to make sure that it's the best it can be. These reviews are like the regular maintenance we give a car to make sure it performs as well as it can for us.

Step 1—Identify and Write the Hopes and Dreams You Have for Each of Your Children

The hopes and dreams you have for your children reach into many areas of their lives. They reflect what you desire for each child as he or she grows and develops into adulthood. When you know what you want for your children, then you are better able to provide good reasons later on for the policies you establish.

Your hopes and dreams are general statements and may involve any area in your child's life. You can be very specific about an area (graduation from college) to quite general (feel good about yourself). Here are some examples:

- Be healthy.
- Live a happy life.
- Be financially secure.
- Have an enjoyable and productive career.
- Be responsible.
- Get good grades in school.
- Have a high level of self-confidence.

Wishes for your children should be stated in positive terms. The focus should be on *do* not *don't*. We've provided a practice sheet on which to write the hopes and dreams you have for each of your children. Make one copy of the practice sheet for each child. Consider how your children differ from one another and see if you can tailor your hopes and dreams to what you know about each one. You may find that some of your hopes and dreams apply to all of your children, while others are unique to a particular child based on his or her personality, interests, aptitudes, etc.

To better illustrate the whole process, we'll use an example and follow it through each step. Our example will have to do with the use of tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs, but as you will see, it doesn't start out looking like that. This particular example will show how the process works while at the same time giving you some valuable tips in establishing a clear and effective family policy with associated rules concerning tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs for your own family. To make it easy for you to spot our example as we proceed from step to step, it will always appear in a box like the following one. Note the example of our hopes and dreams:

Hope and Dream: ***Our children will all grow into healthy adults.***

This is a general statement about a dream that is shared by all parents for all children. Although it says nothing specific about tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs, it sets the stage for the next step.

The expressions you use to describe your hopes and dreams should be general. As we go through the steps of the process, you will see how to build on this beginning general statement, converting it into a set of very specific instructions for your child. These instructions then provide the direction your child needs to ultimately realize your hopes and dreams in his or her own life.

Now use the practice sheet on the next page to think about, identify, and write down your hopes and dreams for each of your children.

2. Convert Your Hopes and Dreams Into Expectations for Each Child

An expectation is a way of clarifying your hopes and dreams and relating them to what it will take to have these hopes and dreams become realities in the lives of your children.

Much has been written about how powerful the expectations we have for our children really are. Research supports the idea that children achieve at higher levels if we expect them to and if we share our expectations with them. It's true. There is magic in expectations, but the magic is not so much in *our* expectations for our children as it is in

Practice Sheet *Hopes and Dreams*

Here is a list of my hopes and dreams for

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what *they* come to expect of themselves. The two are inseparable, but one does not necessarily follow the other.

True, it is vital that you have positive expectations for each of your children, but for these expectations to be realized you have to do the right things. First, make sure that your expectations are reasonable. It's not fair to anyone to expect more than he or she is capable of delivering. By the same token, your expectations should be as high as they can be. Here is an example: It would be unreasonable to expect a child, however long we gave him or her, to jump off a cliff and fly without the aid of some kind of device. On the other hand, if we can see that a child has an interest in flight or flying it would be perfectly reasonable to expect that, over time, as this child grows and matures he or she could learn to fly in any number of ways. The child could learn to fly a plane or glider—or even decide to take up hang-gliding or parasailing. So you see for our expectations to be valid, they have to be possible.

Next, share your expectations with your children so that they can see what possible routes exist for them to achieve these expectations. At the same time, get agreement from them that these expectations are reasonable and achievable. This step is critical because unless each child not only agrees that an expectation is reasonable, but also understands and acknowledges its value for him or her, the whole process can break down.

Finally, support your children in the achievement of these expectations. Do this by providing ways for them to develop skills, behaving yourself in ways that don't contradict your expectation. (It does little good to tell a child that we expect him or her to get good grades if you are constantly telling the child about the dumb things he or she is always doing.) Family Sharing Circles and Family Meetings are ideal places for developing, communicating, nurturing, and supporting expectations in your children.

If you do these things, something wonderful happens. You find that the expectations you have for your children start becoming their expectations for themselves. This is when you see the magic. When your child adopts your expectation and makes it his or her own, the expectation becomes internal. That means that rather than achieving it because YOU have the expectation (external), it is being achieved because your child has the expectation of himself or herself. **This is one of the keys to self-motivation. This transfer is one of the fundamental outcomes of *FAMILY CONNECTIONS*.** When children take ownership of an expectation, everything associated with that expectation becomes simpler and easier. This includes living by the rules and within the limits.

Now let's get back to the process. When you look at your list of hopes and dreams, the ways of converting them into clear statements of expectation will start to become clear. An expectation is a statement of what you expect your child **TO DO** to realize that hope or dream. A statement of expectation is more powerful than a statement of hope. Which sounds stronger, "I hope to be successful" or "I expect to be successful"?

Let's look at our example. We want to convert our hope of having our children grow into healthy adults into an expectation. So we identify something specific we'd expect them to do to stay healthy. Look at the box and see what we came up with:

Hope and Dream: ***Our children will all grow into healthy adults.***

Expectation: ***Each child will do things that will contribute to healthy living and avoid things that will negatively affect good health.***

Use the practice sheet on the next page to translate each of your hopes and dreams into clear expectations for each child. You may find that you can combine two or more hopes and dreams into a single, powerful statement of expectation. Once again, make one copy of the practice sheet for each child.

Expectations

Practice Sheet

Here is a list of the expectations I have for

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3. Determine With Your Family The Policies That Will Support the Realization or Achievement of Expectations

Policies are general statements about specific areas that either contribute to or take away from our ability to achieve expectations. A single expectation may be supported by several policies. Policies reflect the decisions we make about how we will behave in each policy area.

The best way to go about creating family policies is to bring the whole family together in a Family Meeting. Be sure to be prepared with your hopes and dreams and the expectations you've developed around them. You will also want to consider a number of areas for each expectation in which policies need to be developed. Here are some examples of areas where policies can be decided:

- how we treat other people's personal property
- our attention to, awareness of, and empathy for the feelings of others
- how we treat the environment
- how we take care of our bodies (health habits, eating, sleeping, etc.)
- obeying laws
- how we contribute to the requirements of daily living (chores, picking up after ourselves, etc.)

A good way to begin a family policy is with the words, "In our family the policy is . . ."

In the Family Meeting, share with your children what your hopes and dreams are for each of them. You might begin by sharing the hopes and dreams you have in common for all of them and then share those unique to each child. After you have done this, go back over your hopes and dreams and share the expectations you have for your children relating to these hopes and dreams.

Discuss your expectations one by one and make sure each child understands those that pertain to him or her. Encourage questions and comments to be sure that understanding is taking place. After everyone has a grasp of your expectations, start putting together family policies that will support them. Be sure that you give each child a chance to provide input to these policies, and be sure that everyone understands them. By connecting policies to your expectations and expectations to your hopes and dreams, your children will be able to see that policies are not arbitrary, but reflect the love and concern you have for each of them and for their current and future welfare.

In the example, our expectation is that our children will do things that contribute to healthy living and avoid things that negatively affect good health. Obviously there are many specific health factors we could address with policy statements that would affect the health of our children, but we are going to talk about only one in our example. Here is how it works:

Hope and Dream: ***Our children will all grow into healthy adults.***

Expectation: ***Each child will do things that will contribute to healthy living and avoid things that will negatively affect good health.***

Policy: ***In our family the policy is that children will not use tobacco, alcohol, or any other drugs so that they can live lives that are as healthy as possible.***

Take note that this policy is directed at the children, and is a general statement about a specific area. You will likely have a number of family policies to support each of your expectations. It is important that policies, like hopes, dreams, and expectations, be written down. You may want to use a blank journal to formalize and organize policies, expectations, and, of course, the hopes and dreams they are aimed at fulfilling.

Use the practice sheet on the next page to start recording policies you may already have. At a Family Meeting, use the practice sheet as a worksheet on which to record the ideas of family members as you create new policies.

Practice Sheet *Our Family Policies*

Policy Area: ______________________________

Policy Statement: ______________________________

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Policy Area: ______________________________

Policy Statement: ______________________________

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Policy Area: ______________________________

Policy Statement: ______________________________

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Make additional copies of this practice sheet as required.

4. Create Workable Rules as Guidelines to Help Children Adhere to Family Policies

Every policy becomes the seed for developing a set of rules. When these rules are followed, they will ensure that everyone is living by the policy. By connecting rules to policies, you are adding another link to the chain of the process. When your children can see how a rule relates to a policy and how this in turn supports an expectation, and how the expectation reflects your hopes and dreams, you give life to the statement, "We have these rules because we love you."

Although exploration and experimentation are an essential part of the adventure of growing up, parents must set limits and establish rules. We don't let a toddler walk into a busy street to teach him or her about danger; we closely supervise and watch to ensure that the child understands how far he or she may explore. In so doing, we begin the process of establishing limits regarding this part of his or her life. These limits or rules encompass not only the beliefs and practices we rely on to raise our children but also help our children to grow into healthy, responsible adults.

Be aware that children will test these limits. "Do Mom and Dad really mean it when they say I have chores or shouldn't smoke?" Children question what will happen if they violate rules that have been established. The real world is filled with rules, and any child who grows up without accepting reasonable limits at home is not likely to accept them when dealing with larger issues involving the rules of society, or even good health. This may be particularly true in connection with rules related to the use of tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs, and can result because an unspoken rule has been allowed to develop that says, "You may do whatever you like." Children need to know their limits, respect rules, and understand the consequences of performance or non-performance within those rules.

Guidelines for setting rules

Here are some important considerations when developing limits and rules for children of all ages:

1. Set rules that are clear and reasonable.
2. Be prepared to consistently enforce the rules.
3. Set appropriate and relevant consequences for each rule.
4. Impose these consequences objectively and without anger.

The following pages expand on each of these guidelines to help you begin or improve on this important process.

Set rules that are clear and reasonable

Your family needs rules in order to function, and in order to effectively lead the family you must get cooperation in observing these rules. Nevertheless, rules that are unreasonable and extreme and that require autocratic authority to enforce do not lend themselves to developing cooperative children.

Families that produce happy, effective and competent children provide a combination of supervision and support along with reasonable challenges designed to promote independence. This combination represents neither strict control nor total freedom, but rather, a balance between providing limits and opening doors—and then encouraging children to move on and grow. Obviously the age and maturity of the child will determine the amount of freedom and independence you will encourage. The rules we set to define limits for a child of six are quite different from those for a sixteen year old. Keeping this in mind, you will be able to fashion rules that work for each of your children by making them reasonable and by using language that each child can understand.

Now is a good time for us to go back to our example to see how the process is developing. Here are a few rules that may be applied to our example policy statement, which says the children will not use or abuse tobacco, alcohol, or any other drugs. After reviewing the process, look over the list of rules we've provided and determine if you would add others:

Hope and Dream: ***Our children will all grow into healthy adults.***

Expectation: ***Each child will do things that will contribute to healthy living and avoid things that will negatively affect good health.***

Policy: ***In our family the policy is that children will not use tobacco, alcohol, or any other drugs so that they can live lives that are as healthy as possible.***

Rules:

- ***You will not use tobacco in any form. This includes smoking and chewing tobacco.***
- ***You will not drink any alcoholic beverages, or any beverages containing alcohol.***
- ***You will not ride in a car with anyone who has been drinking, or using drugs of any kind. You will go to the nearest phone and call home for a ride.***
- ***You will not use any drug or substance that is not prescribed medication and then only within the prescribed dosages.***

As with policies, it is very important that children not only understand the rules, but are a part of their development. You may be surprised at how much your children contribute to the creation of clear, workable rules. Even more important, however, is the fact that by having your children contribute to the writing of rules you are much more likely to obtain their cooperation in enforcing them.

Be prepared to consistently enforce rules

Being consistent about enforcing the rules is essential. Considerable research has been done that shows the harmful effects of inconsistent rewards and punishment. When people don't know what to expect they may develop all sorts of disorders and problems. Uncertainty is very stressful and inconsistency in enforcing rules produces uncertainty in children. Inconsistency gives children no opportunity to learn acceptable behavior and to avoid undesirable behavior. In short, when they don't know what the consequences are (because they are always different or are not enforced), they can become frustrated, confused, and angry. It takes time and effort on the part of parents to follow through with consequences, but in the long run the payoff is great. Your children will begin to learn accountability and responsibility, and they will know they can count on you to do what you say.

5. Determine the Consequences Associated with the Rules

Consequences should be just that—consequences, not punishment. Both can be effective in getting immediate results, but appropriate and relevant consequences also have long-term growth benefits. Punishment can take many forms: spanking, isolation, restriction, criticism, humiliation, performing an unrelated task, etc. These forms of punishment are employed at the expense of your child's self-esteem and self-motivation. Punishment is also generally focused on short-term results—stopping or correcting a behavior now. It doesn't give your child opportunities to develop problem-solving and decision-making skills. With punishment, the responsibility for solving the problem rests on the parent's shoulders. You have the power, since you are bigger and stronger. You get what you want. This, of course, suggests to children that once they've been punished, they can misbehave again until the next time they're caught.

Punishment generally doesn't make a distinction between the child and the behavior. The message the child gets is, "You've done a bad thing and you're bad too." This becomes a learning that colors a child's developing self-concept and sense of worth. As we've repeatedly said, focus on the behavior not the child. Effective consequences respect a child's self-worth.

For consequences to be effective, they need to be related to the behavior and administered immediately. Don't spend a lot of time on warnings and reprimands. They are most often a waste of time and effort. They don't deal with the immediate issue, but only delay the consequences. By continually throwing out warnings ("Stop that or I'll . . ."), you are teaching your children not to place value on a rule that has been established. If you don't take the rules seriously, how can you expect your children to do so. When a consequence occurs immediately, your child learns that it resulted because he or she made a poor choice. If warnings delay or replace consequences, your child loses an opportunity to develop responsibility for his or her behavior. In addition, repeated infractions of the same rule need to result in escalation of the severity of the consequence.

Impose consequences objectively and without anger

Getting angry will only compound the problem. Sounds simple, particularly knowing that there are times when our children drive us to distraction. Getting angry is something we do to relieve ourselves of the frustration we feel when our expectations are not met. If you want the best results from your child, don't get angry, lecture, criticize, interrogate, or punish. Don't allow anger to get in the way by letting it take control. Sometimes, you just have to count to ten or take a deep breath. Do whatever you need to do to maintain your equilibrium and minimize your reaction.

It's good to keep in mind that children learn rules in a manner not unlike sticking a toe in the water to see how cold it is. They test the rules, and they test the limits. Very seldom do they do this to make us angry or to hurt us or themselves. Most of the time they just want to know more about the rule, just the same way a toe in the water tells them more about what they can expect when they jump in. They are learning, and you are there to assist. By viewing behavior in this manner, you can be more objective about both the behavior and the consequence. In this way the child can clearly understand the limit or rule and do so in a way that promotes positive growth.

Effective consequences are pre-determined, clear, and reasonable. They are consistently imposed in the process of enforcing rules, and they are related to the behavior or incident. They escalate in severity for repeated infractions and are applied without anger.

As an example, let's say you have a rule that says your son should put his bike into the garage when he is finished riding it. When you arrive home, his bike is laying down in the driveway. You are annoyed because the bike is in your way and not put away as the rule states. In order to have consequences related to the incident, they must relate to the bike in some way. It would make no sense to tell your son he could not watch television that evening because he had left the bike out. Television has nothing to do with him leaving the bike out. Your son should know in advance what will happen if he leaves his bike out and the consequence should be reasonable and easy to understand.

If the consequences were to escalate in severity, it might mean that the first time you would simply speak to your son, while the second time he would lose the use of the bike for a day or two. Repeated disregard might mean long-term loss of the bike. The consequences get progressively tougher.

Follow through in consistently applying the limit or rule and its consequences and do so without anger. If you have clearly outlined the limit and consequences, your son has made an informed decision. When he leaves his bike out, he absolutely knows what will happen. Anger does not help the situation; your son simply needs to experience the consequences of the choices he is making.

No matter how reasonable a rule or limit looks to you, expect your children to test it. They want to know if you mean business and there is a need developmentally to exert some autonomy and independence. Try to set the limits in such a way that, if your children falter some, it will not get them in deep trouble. That means having clear, strong limits that you follow through on and check on for compliance. Rules along with their associated consequences that are written down and posted for everyone to read offer a ready reminder to the whole family about what is expected of each person. With all this clearly stated it is more difficult for children to say they didn't understand or they forgot.

More about consequences

Remember the partial list of rules we developed in our example? In light of what you've just read, what would be appropriate consequences for infractions of those rules? Perhaps restriction would be reasonable, or maybe a child breaking a rule should be forbidden from associating with a friend or groups of peers that engage in activities outside your family rules. If you keep in mind the guidelines for fair and equitable consequences that relate to the rule and its violation, you will be able to tailor consequences to deeds, and can expect positive outcomes. Now let's take a last look at our example to see how we've progressed. Since consequences are connected to each rule, we need to select just one rule and develop possible consequences, both positive and negative, that we think will be effective.

Hope and Dream: *Our children will all grow into healthy adults.*

Expectation: *Each child will do things that will contribute to healthy living and avoid things that will negatively affect good health.*

Policy: *In our family the policy is that children will not use tobacco, alcohol, or any other drugs so that they can live lives that are as healthy as possible*

Rule: • *You will not use tobacco in any form. This includes smoking and chewing tobacco.*

Consequences:

Positive Consequences of observing the rule:

- *Child receives family recognition (for example, a special family award you create and present at a Family Meeting).*
- *Child receives extended privileges (for example, invites friends to participate in a special event).*
- *Child receives special reward (for example, child is invited to plan a special activity just the way he or she would like it).*

Negative Consequences for breaking the rule:

- *A privilege is suspended or participation in an activity is forbidden.*
- *Child is restricted from being with friends (particularly if they are using tobacco).*
- *Child is enrolled in a tobacco awareness or recovery program.*

As you look at the consequences, note how the positive consequences are listed in increasing order of magnitude with the rewards becoming greater with continued observance of the rule. On the other hand, negative consequences increase in severity with repeated infractions of the rule. A way of further escalating the magnitude of either positive or negative consequences is to add consequences together to either increase a reward for positive behavior to intensify the severity of the consequence for negative behavior.

Remember the positive consequences

We spoke earlier about catching our children doing something "right." It is important to think back over this section on rules and notice that most of what has been said deals with the times when our children have difficulty with breaking a rule or going beyond a limit.

Consequences, unfortunately, are almost always thought of as being negative. One of the most important lessons children can learn is that the consequences of violating a rule or going beyond a limit represent only one side of the coin. The other side has to do with rewards for having observed rules and stayed within the limits. Rewards are consequences, too—positive consequences associated with positive behavior. Keeping the rules and observing the limits is positive behavior and should be rewarded. Therefore, look back over the guidelines for setting workable rules and develop consequences for the times when your children do behave as you would have them by observing the rules that have been established.

Through positive consequences, children not only learn to clearly understand the rules, they learn to value them and see the benefits that accrue by sticking to them. The same guidelines apply to both positive and negative behavior and the associated consequences. Descriptive and appreciative praise should be a primary positive consequence when you catch your children doing something "right."

Our family rules

On the following page, you will find places where you can list the rules established in your family, as well as the positive and negative consequences of each. If you need more space, copy the sheet. This same format can be used to list the chores and responsibilities of each child along with the positive consequences (perhaps an allowance) of doing the job well, or the negative consequences (maybe no allowance) if the job is not done, or is done poorly.

Use copies of the same practice sheet to expand on your family policy regarding tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs. Use the ideas presented in each step of the process as guides for developing your expectations, policy, rules, and, of course, positive and negative consequences. There are many areas where you will positively touch the lives of your children using the tools found in *FAMILY CONNECTIONS,* but having developed in your children a sense of personal commitment regarding your expectation and policy on tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs will be at the top of the list.

6. Regularly Review Your Expectations, Policies, Rules, and Consequences

If you don't already have well established family rules, a Family Meeting is an excellent place to involve everyone in discussing and formulating rules and their consequences, both positive and negative.

If you already have clear rules, use the Family Meeting to reinforce or modify them and to establish new ones as time goes by.

The final step in the process should be repeated on a regular basis. To ensure that all of what you have done keeps pace with the changes that will surely take place in your family, it is important that expectations, policies, rules, and consequences be reviewed to make sure that they continue to be reasonable and appropriate.

This also becomes a refining process wherein you gradually fine tune the elements of the process to make them more workable and effective. Family Sharing Circles and Family Meetings are tools you use to enhance and add value to the process. Now we want to examine some of the specific elements that contribute to your ability to bring life to this process within the walls of your own home and within the context of your own family.

> ***Feelings of worth can flourish only in an atmosphere where individual differences are appreciated, mistakes are tolerated, communication open, and rules are flexible—the kind of atmosphere that is found in a nurturing family.***
>
> **Virginia Satir**

Planning Sheet

Our Family Rules

Policy ____

____

____

Rule or Limit #___

____

____

____

Consequences

Positive (When It's Observed)	Negative (When It's Not Observed)
______________	______________
______________	______________
______________	______________
______________	______________

Rule or Limit #___

____

____

____

Consequences

Positive (When It's Observed)	Negative (When It's Not Observed)
______________	______________
______________	______________
______________	______________
______________	______________

Copy this page for use in defining additional rules and their related consequences.

Developing the Use of "I" Messages

In the process of enforcing rules, you will most likely have to confront your children with their unacceptable behavior. Delivering an "I" message rather than a "You" message can make the difference between effective and ineffective communication. Since confrontations are a part of limit and rule enforcement, you want the best and most productive results.

"I sure get angry and discouraged when I come home from work and find dirty dishes in the sink," is more effective than, "You always make such a mess in the kitchen. Aren't you ever going to learn to clean up after yourself?" The "You" message is usually interpreted by the child to mean that he or she is bad. This usually puts the child on the defensive and almost always provokes resistance to changing the behavior or beginning to observe a prescribed rule or limit. Instead of communicating that there is something wrong with or bad about the child, an "I" message simply lets the child know what YOU are feeling. It is far less threatening when you let your child honestly know the effect his or her behavior has had on you. Consider the difference in a child's reaction to the messages provided in these two lists.

"You" Messages	"I" Messages
You're a bad boy. You've left your toys out again.	I can't clean the rug when all these toys are left out.
You're acting like a baby. Stop making all that racket.	I can't drive this car when there is so much noise in the back seat.
You stop that right now, or I'll . . .	It's really hard for me to take care of the baby with all this fighting going on.
Why don't you ever . . .	When things like this happen, it makes me crazy.
You always leave the lights on. Why can't you ever remember to turn them off?	When the lights are left on, it upsets me because of all the electricity we waste.

"You" Messages Disguised As "I" Messages

When giving an "I" message, describe the child's behavior and share your feelings honestly, explaining how the behavior affects you. A word of caution: Beware of the "You" message disguised as an "I" message. Always remember to focus on your feelings and the results of your child's behavior. Most "You" messages begin with the focus on the child and the message almost always contains the word "you" or "your." Notice the examples of "You" messages just presented. When we disguise a "You" message as an "I" message it might *begin* with the focus on you as the parent, but look at what happens during the rest of the message: "When the lights are left on, it upsets me (Great "I" message so far) because of all the electricity YOU (Oops!) waste." If you look back at the last "I" message in our examples, you can see how easily we slipped that "you" into our message. We changed what began as an effective "I" message into an ineffective and destructive "You" message by just substituting "I" for "we" in the statement.

In an "I" message, the focus is on your (the parent's) feelings in response to the child's behavior. A "You" message focuses on the child and usually says little about your feelings. Letting your child know the effect his behavior has on you is less threatening than to imply there is something bad or deficient about him because of the behavior.

Changing "You" Messages to "I" Messages

On the following page is a practice sheet that will let you examine some of the ways you communicate with your children. You'll be working with some situations that you may encounter in your own family. Read each situation and the related "You" message. Then write an appropriate "I" message in the space provided. As you complete the exercise, think of situations where rules have been broken and you have had to confront misbehavior. Think about how you handled the situations and, perhaps, how you might have handled situations differently by making effective use of "I" messages. For additional practice, try writing a few "I" messages that would have worked in these situations.

Practice Sheet 43

Changing "You" Messages to "I" Messages

Situation: You are trying to explain something to your child and he or she keeps interrupting.

"You" Message: You never listen!

"I" Message:

Situation: Your teenager cleaned out a dresser and without checking, threw out some family photos.

"You" Message: You're so stupid. Why don't you ever ask before you do things?

"I" Message:

Situation: One of your children is playing a radio so loud that it is disturbing you.

"You" Message: Why do you have to play that so loud? You're never considerate of others.

"I" Message:

Situation: Your teenager didn't show up on time to meet you after school and you had to wait.

"You" Message: I can never trust you. You told me to meet you at 4 o'clock and then you didn't have the courtesy to be on time.

"I" Message:

Situation: Your child wants to go to an amusement park, but has not finished his or her agreed upon chores.

"You" Message: Why should I do what you want when you never do what I ask. You never take care of your responsibilities.

"I" Message:

Teaching Your Children to Use "I" Messages

A logical extension of using "I" messages with your family is to teach your children how to formulate "I" messages so that they can start putting them to use in *their* communications with others. "I" messages will assist your children in every relationship they will ever have. By using "I" messages, children learn to be responsible for their feelings and behaviors and are encouraged to stop blaming others.

A Family Meeting is an excellent place to introduce the concepts of "I" messages and "You " messages, to experiment with their use and examine their effects. As with any new skill, "I" messages require many repetitions to master, and the Family Sharing Circle and Family Meeting are great places for safe and enjoyable practice.

Use the guide on the next page to lead a discussion about "I" messages in a Family Meeting. You'll see that it is similar to the practice sheet we provided for your use earlier, but that it does not provide a space for writing an appropriate "I" message. Describe each situation to your family, and then ask everyone to work together to come up with the kind of "I" message that would turn the situation into a positive growth-promoting experience.

You'll be surprised at how many different ways there are to respond positively to these kinds of situations. Listen carefully to your children because they will have some great ideas. Their "I" messages will also be examples of how they would like *you* to speak to them.

If you go back to the section entitled "How to Praise Your Children," you will notice striking similarities between giving descriptive, appreciative praise and the "I" messages you've just been studying. In both cases, you are describing the results of your child's behavior and the effect it has on you. You keep the focus on the action and not the actor. As you can see, "I" messages are woven into effective praise for positive behavior just as they are into effective confrontation of negative behavior.

Valuable research has been done concerning the amount of praise to give a child in relationship to the negative feedback he or she receives. Frey and Carloch, in *Enhancing Self-Esteem* (Accelerated Development, Inc., 1989), tell us that a ratio of five praises to every one criticism or negative confrontation is best for helping children develop

Changing "You" Messages to "I" Messages

Situation: A brother and sister are arguing over which television program to watch.

"You" Message: You're a bully. You always want to watch your program and you never give anyone else a chance to see something they want.

Situation: A child takes another's skateboard (or toy) without asking.

"You" Message: Don't ever do that again. I always ask you when I want to borrow something. Why don't *you* ever ask?

Situation: One child calls another names.

"You" Message: You "bird brain!" Stop calling me "brace face."

Situation: A teenager borrows a cassette tape and doesn't return it when promised.

"You" Message: You're really inconsiderate. You haven't given back my tape and I'm not going to let you borrow anything again.

Situation: Someone borrows a sweater and brings it back with a stain on it.

"You" Message: Yuk! You're a real slob. I really can't trust you with anything.

two praises for every negative confrontation, children begin to exhibit neurotic behavior and feelings of uncertainty, insecurity, inadequacy, and inferiority. None of these are feelings we want our children experiencing, but the really bad news is that if the ratio slips to one praise for each negative confrontation, children develop feelings of despair and hopelessness.

Many times, parents aren't aware of how often they relate negatively to their children. Certainly there are times when you must confront children with their unacceptable behavior, but it is vital to offset these confrontations with active recognition of positive behavior using descriptive and appreciative praise. Furthermore, the potential damage of negative confrontations is significantly reduced and, indeed, can be converted to positive growth by using "I" messages instead of "You" messages. In this manner it is possible to remove the "negative" from the negative confrontation and have confrontations that are positive experiences for both you and your child.

If you consistently catch your children doing things right and take advantage of confrontations to make them teachable moments, you'll be doing much to develop important skills and to enhance healthy, positive, and growing self-esteem.

Listening to Your Children—Actively

We said earlier that nothing says, "I care," more effectively than really listening to someone. Family Sharing Circles and Family Meetings both employ listening as an integral part of the process. This is because, more than anything else, their success depends on members really listening to one another.

Children want to be understood. They want their parents to understand how they feel and what they think. Active listening is a process by which you actively attempt to understand what your child is feeling or making an effort to express. You then put your understanding into your own words and give them back to your child. You don't send a message of your own. You don't reprimand, offer advice, or give your opinions. You don't analyze or question. You just use your own words to repeat what you've heard as you understand it. When you are in the process of active listening, it is not the time to give an

"I" message. It is the time to simply tell your child what the message was that you heard and to do this in your own words—nothing more. Initially, this may sound like a mechanical response, but with effective active listening, you will demonstrate true concern, understanding, and empathy to your child.

Use active listening with your children when they are upset. Statements such as, "I understand your feelings are hurt because you were called names," and "I know you don't like other people borrowing your things without asking," or "Sounds like you feel sad," can help children accept their feelings because their parent has accepted them. When you reflect your child's feelings, you are recognizing those feelings by giving them a name. Active listening shows that you understand both the meaning of the words and ideas spoken and the feelings behind them. When you listen, concentrate on the child rather than thinking of what you will say next. Don't interrupt to offer your opinion or correct a mistake. If something is not clear, ask questions only to be sure you are getting the message, then summarize what has been said in your own words without opinion or judgement.

Active Listening

Active listening is a wonderful process for helping your child work through upsets to discover exactly what his or her feelings are. Active listening is also one of the most significant skills we can acquire for expanding the effectiveness of our adult lives and the experience of growing into adulthood.

When we listen actively to our children, two things happen at once. First, negative feelings lessen or disappear after they are expressed and acknowledged in a supportive, nonjudgmental manner, and second, we are modeling and thus teaching our children the skill itself.

There are other benefits and reasons to use active listening. When you listen with the idea of accurately understanding what's being said to you, and with real concern, feelings of warmth and closeness develop. The experience of being heard and truly understood by a parent is especially satisfying to children, and they respond with loving feelings.

Active listening helps develop problem-solving skills in your children. As you model and teach active listening, your children begin acquiring the skill, and they become increasingly able to talk through or articulate a problem clearly as opposed to having it just spinning in their heads because they are unable to express it. Through discussion, they are better able to work toward a solution. Active listening also facilitates the growth of a child's ability to express himself or herself effectively. In the field of education, we call this *oral language development*. Many years of research demonstrate that as listening skills increase so do speaking (oral language) skills.

As you use active listening, not only will your listening habits improve, but you will be modeling a skill that your children will begin to imitate. Soon, they will be more willing and able to listen to you. Often, parents complain that their children don't listen. A significant reason for this is that they simply have not been *taught* to listen.

Even before children learn to talk, they start developing their listening habits. Some of these first habits will be with them throughout their lives. As soon as children learn to talk, they can begin to develop the habit of active listening. Children learn to listen by observing the modeling you give them and by having opportunities to practice.

Active listening is a simple way to convey respect and concern. It is also an important ingredient in every Family Sharing Circle and Family Meeting. Being a good listener enhances every relationship we have for as long as we live. Give yourself and your children plenty of opportunities for practice.

Here is an excellent example of how a parent gave quality time to a child by using the skills of active listening that have been outlined. A child comes home after having had a bad day at school:

Child: *Sally and Juan wouldn't let me play with them at school today.*

Parent: *You feel like you were being left out.*

Child: *Yes. They had lots of fun and all I did was stand around watching their games. I didn't have any fun.*

Parent: *You'd really like to have been a part of their games.*

Child: *I think they're really mean, and I hate the way they are treating me.*

Parent: *You really don't like how they are behaving toward you.*

Child: *That's right. Sometimes they're really mean. It's like they don't want to play with me or anybody else. They think they are better than everybody.*

Parent: *You sure hate the way they are treating you.*

Child: *I don't think they are being fair. The other day, they called Mary lots of names.*

Parent: *Sounds like they hurt Mary's feelings.*

Child: *They called her stupid and dumb and then ran away from her on the playground. That's not nice of them. I don't do things like that to my friends.*

Parent: *You have a different idea about what it takes to be a good friend.*

Child: *Yes. I think you should be friendly and always include everybody in your games.*

Parent: *Your ideas about what it takes to be a friend are very different from Sally's and Juan's.*

Child: *I'd never act like them. Maybe tomorrow I'll get Mary and we'll play together. I like the way she treats me.*

Use the practice sheet on the next page to sharpen your skills as an active listener. We have created a number of different situations. Use the space provided to write down your response as an active listener. You can also use this practice sheet to create role plays in Family Meetings where everyone can have a chance at being an active listener. Use your imagination and come up with some situations that resemble things that happen in your own family.

Active Listening

Practice Sheet

Situation: Your child comes home from school in tears and says, "Joyce called me stupid at recess today and wouldn't play with me."

Situation: The girl that your teenaged son asked to the prom turned him down. He comes to you and says, "I don't think I'll go to the prom. I don't think anyone wants to go with me."

Situation: Your daughter just won the school spelling bee. She comes home from school excited, waves her award and says, "I won, I won! Wow, look at my award."

Situation: Your son missed the school bus. You were busy and couldn't pick him up so he had to walk home from school. He comes in grumpy and sullen. Without a word he goes into his room and slams the door.

51

Developing Essential Life Skills

This section includes activity sheets for you to use with your children. They are organized around four sets of essential skills: **Decision Making, Problem Solving, Goal Setting**, and **Learning to "Say No."**

Your children need these skills daily, and they will continue to need them in virtually every endeavor and every relationship throughout their lives. That is why the term "Life Skills" is so appropriate. To the extent that your children possess these skills, they will feel competent to control the events and solve the problems that they encounter each day.

Children who are competent in these Life Skills tend to experience success, and when they are successful feel good about themselves. Self-esteem is enhanced and a lifetime pattern of personal achievement and self-reliance is established.

Most of the activity sheets on the following pages are designed for your children to complete. In some cases they will need your assistance. In *all* cases, the activities provide excellent opportunities for you to interact with your children on a one-to-one basis. Talk with and assist each child as needed while he or she completes the activity sheet, and engage the child in a discussion afterwards, asking questions about what has been learned. Some of the activities are designed to be completed as a family.

In each of the four skill areas, we've provided activities appropriate for younger children as well as older children and adults.

Helping Your Children Learn to Make Decisions

Decision Making is a critical and complex area of human functioning. Decision making starts in early childhood and continues throughout life. Some of the decisions we make affect our lives on a moment-to-moment basis and others set our course for the future. By encouraging your children to explore and understand the many aspects of decision making, you will be helping them develop a skill that will be of great value for the rest of their lives.

52 LIFE SKILL: DECISION MAKING

Decision making involves choosing from among alternatives. If there is only one choice, no decision is required. The skills of decision making include:

1. **Defining (describing) the issue or situation that needs to be decided.**
2. **Gathering information.** If a child doesn't know that there are waffles in the freezer and muffins in the pantry, he or she cannot decide to have waffles or muffins for breakfast. If your family is trying to decide where to go on a vacation, the more information members gather about possible destinations, activities and accommodations at each, costs, etc., the better equipped you are to make the best possible choice.
3. **Listing alternatives.**
4. **Weighing the advantages and disadvantages of each alternative.** Each family member's perception of advantages and disadvantages depends on his or her values, needs, and goals. These things *influence* decisions. Other sources of influence include other people and advertising. The ability to identify what is influencing one's reactions to various alternatives is a decision-making skill.
5. **Making the decision.** Even after they have done a thorough job on all the other steps, some people—children and adults alike—have trouble deciding. However, putting off a decision or doing nothing *is* a decision—one that frequently creates problems later on. That is why this final step, the *act of deciding,* is in itself an important skill.

In teaching decision making to your children, it's important to allow them to make decisions for themselves on a daily basis. Even young children should have opportunities to choose from among alternatives. Simple decisions like what to wear to school and what story to read begin the process of building decision-making skills. Be on the alert for situations in which your children can make personal decisions, and whenever appropriate, include them in family decision making. Family Meetings offer an ideal setting for the development of individual and family decision-making skills.

The following activity sheets are designed to help your children think about decisions they have made in the past, examine the steps involved in making effective decisions, and practice those steps by completing several decision-making exercises.

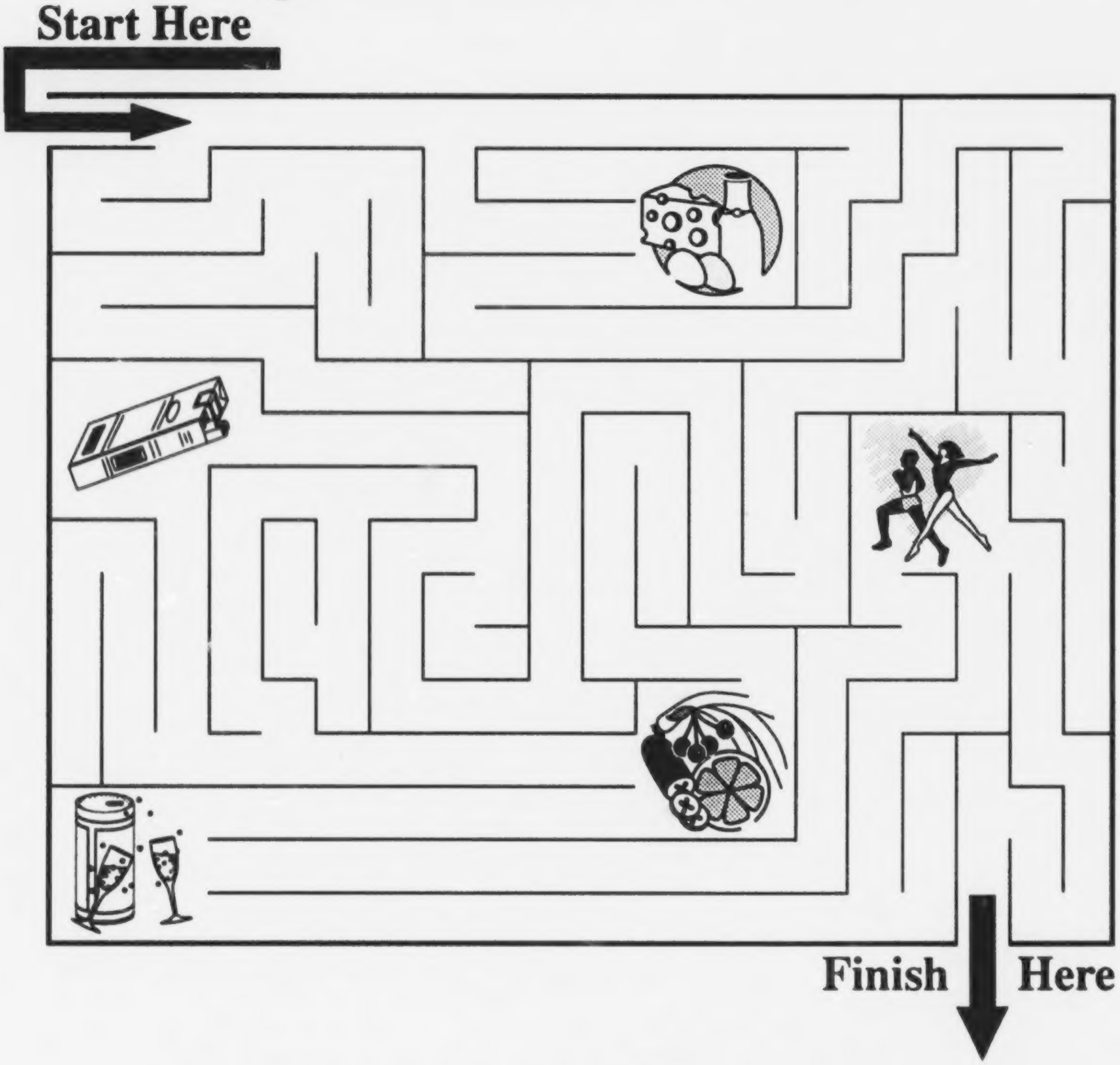
Activity Sheet 53

Making Healthy Decisions

You will make many decisions as you go through life. Some of the most important decisions are about the care of your body. As you find the path through this maze, you'll come across pictures that represent healthy and unhealthy decisions you can make.

Put a ⊘ over those things that you should avoid.

Put a ○ around those things that are good for your body.



54 Activity Sheet

Decisions, Decisions, Decisions!

All of us make decisions every day. Sometimes these decisions are easy, but other times they require careful thought—particularly if they involve our health and safety. Complete this experience sheet by following the directions. Then talk with your parents about what made certain decisions easy and other decisions hard.

What did you decide today? Write your decisions on the lines.

Continued

I decided to take care of myself by doing the following:

1. ____________________
2. ____________________
3. ____________________
4. ____________________
5. ____________________

In play and work, I decided to do the following:

1. ____________________
2. ____________________
3. ____________________
4. ____________________
5. ____________________

I followed these safety rules today:

1. ____________________
2. ____________________
3. ____________________
4. ____________________
5. ____________________

I got along with others today by doing these things:

1. ____________________
2. ____________________
3. ____________________
4. ____________________
5. ____________________

Some decisions were easy. You didn't have to think about them very much. ***Put an E beside the decisions that were easy.***

Other decisions were more important. Maybe you had to think hard about them. ***Put a T beside the decisions you had to think about.***

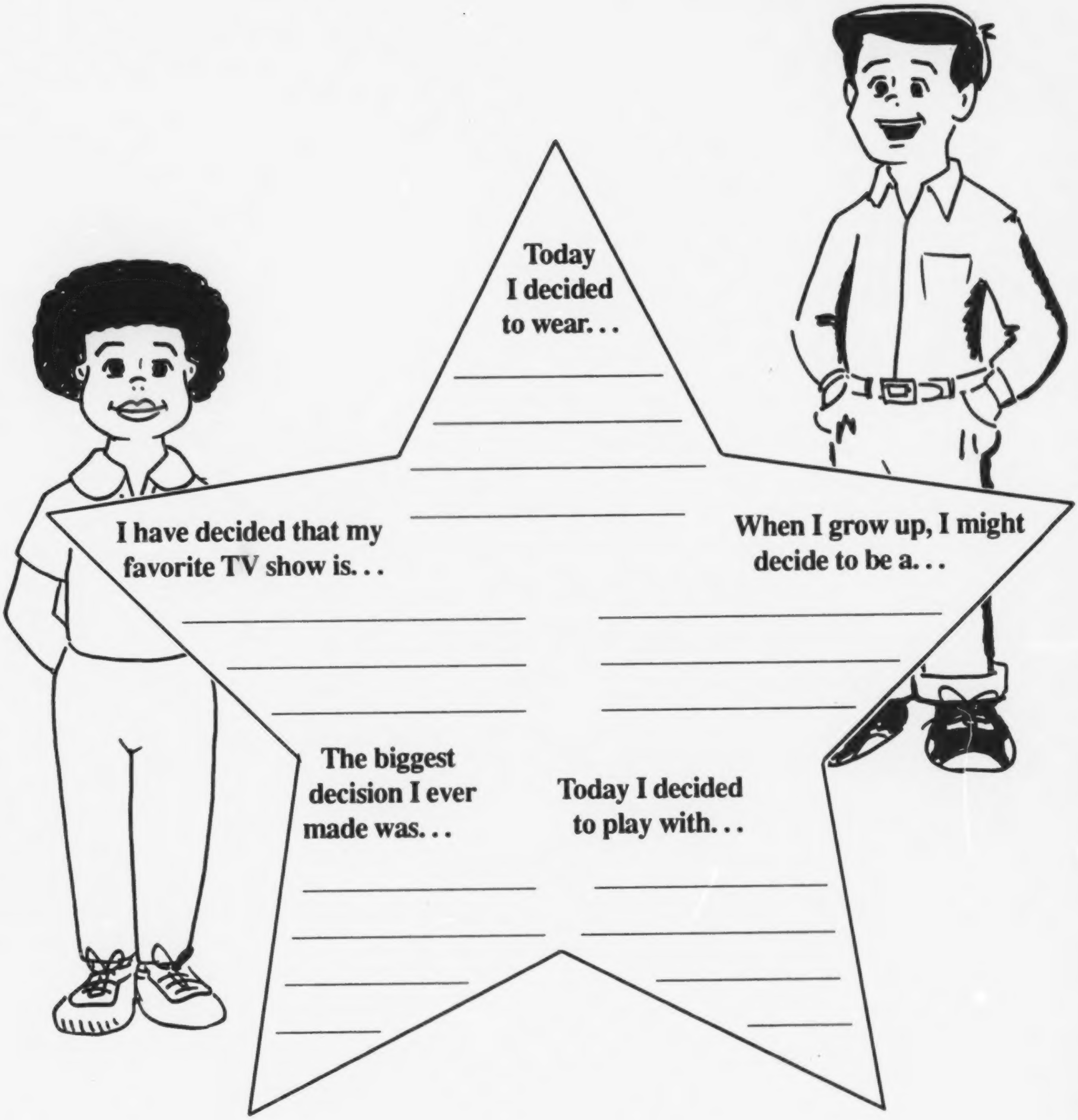
When you have a decision to make, ask yourself these questions:

1. Is it an important decision?
2. What are my choices?
3 What would happen if I made each choice?
4. What would people who care about me want me to do?

56 LIFE SKILL: DECISION MAKING

Activity Sheet

Today I'm A Star



Today I decided to wear. . .

I have decided that my favorite TV show is. . .

When I grow up, I might decide to be a. . .

The biggest decision I ever made was. . .

Today I decided to play with. . .

Inside each point of the star is an area where you can write about a decision. Write your answers on the lines.

Activity Log

Activity Sheet 57

See how many decisions you are already making by completing this worksheet. Pick an afternoon and evening in the near future and write down all of the activities you are involved in during each of the time intervals shown. Include your regularly scheduled family activities, as well as any special activities, chores, meals, TV viewing, reading, homework, play, and bed time. If possible, make copies of the worksheet and fill out one each day for two or three days.

Day of the week: ____________

3:00 ______________________________

____

4:00 ______________________________

____

5:00 ______________________________

____

6:00 ______________________________

____

7:00 ______________________________

____

8:00 ______________________________

____

9:00 ______________________________

____

Go back and circle the activities that YOU decided to do.

Activity Sheet

The Decision-Making Process

Whether you realize it or not, you are always making decisions. Every day you make lots of little decisions like what to wear to school, what to watch on TV, whom to play with at recess, and more.

What are some little decisions you've already made today?

____

____

____

____

Sometimes you make big decisions too, like how to spend your summer vacation, or whether to talk to someone about a problem you're having. **What is one big decision you have made?**

____

____

____

You'll be making decisions throughout your entire life. While you are learning and growing, you may not feel comfortable making extremely important decisions. Gradually it will get easier— especially if you learn the following 5-step process for decision making.

Step 1—State the Decision To Be Made

The first step in making sound decisions is to clearly *state* the issue or problem to be decided.

In the space below, describe what it is that you must decide:

____

____

____

____

____

____

Step 2—Know What's Important and What You Really Want

Decisions are made in order to reach a desired goal—to have or do something you want. Think about what you really want to have or to have happen.

In the space below write about your goals in as much detail as possible:

Step 3—Gather Information

Have you ever heard the term "informed decision?" It means the decision is based on facts and thought. It is a decision that has been made with the benefit of INFORMATION. For you to make an informed decision, you need to gather information—as much of it as you can get. The more information you have, the better your chances of making a wise decision. To gather information you can talk to people, ask questions, read, watch television, and make observations. Do whatever is necessary to get the information you need.

List here the people you'll talk to and places you'll go to get information:

Continued

On another sheet of paper, write notes to yourself about the information and facts you gather.

Step 4—Find and List Alternatives

Now that you have gathered lots of information, think about all the choices (alternatives) you have. Understanding the advantages and disadvantages of each alternative will help you make the best decision.

On the chart below, list the alternatives you have in making your decision. Then, list the advantages and disadvantages of each.

Alternative	Advantages	Disadvantages

Now look at each alternative and ask yourself: ***What will happen to me and to the other people involved if I choose this alternative?***

Step 5—Make a Decision

Now that you've described the decision that must be made, looked at what's important to you, gathered information, and listed your alternatives, go ahead and make a decision. **Write about your final decision here:**

Thinking About Decisions

Think of a decision you made recently that worked out well. What was it?

____

____

____

Who and/or what influenced your decision?

____ your needs (things you can't get along without)
____ your values (what you like)
____ your goals (what you want to accomplish)
____ other people (Who?)
____ advertising
____ other (What?)

THIS WAY
THIS WAY

Start thinking now about some of the decisions you will make in the future. What kind of career would you like to have? How can you help the world become what you believe it should be? Decisions right now aren't necessary, but it's not too early for you to start getting your thoughts together on these subjects.

After all, change isn't possible until you make the decision to do it.

Bring to mind a decision that you are in the process of thinking over now. Ask the advice of three people: a person who is at least three years younger than you, one who is about your age and one who is at least ten years older. Then ask yourself:

Whose advice would be easiest to follow? ____________________

Whose advice seems the most reasonable? ____________________

Try this:

Next time you watch a movie or TV show, notice the decisions the characters in the story make. You will probably think some of the decisions are reasonable and others will seem wrong or foolish. See if you can analyze how each decision was made.

Activity Sheet

The Many Sides of Decision Making

Sometimes decisions are risky.

Sheila thinks she wants to go to college, but she isn't sure what it will be like. She's been planning to go to a nearby community college for two years while continuing to live at home. Then she finds out that she could live with her aunt in the city and go to a well-known four-year college. Sheila doesn't know if she really wants to leave home yet, if she wants to live with her aunt, or which college will be the better choice for her.

What do you think Sheila should do?

____ Live at home and go to the community college.
____ Live with her aunt and go to the four-year college.
____ Get a lot more information before making a decision.

What types of information does Sheila need?

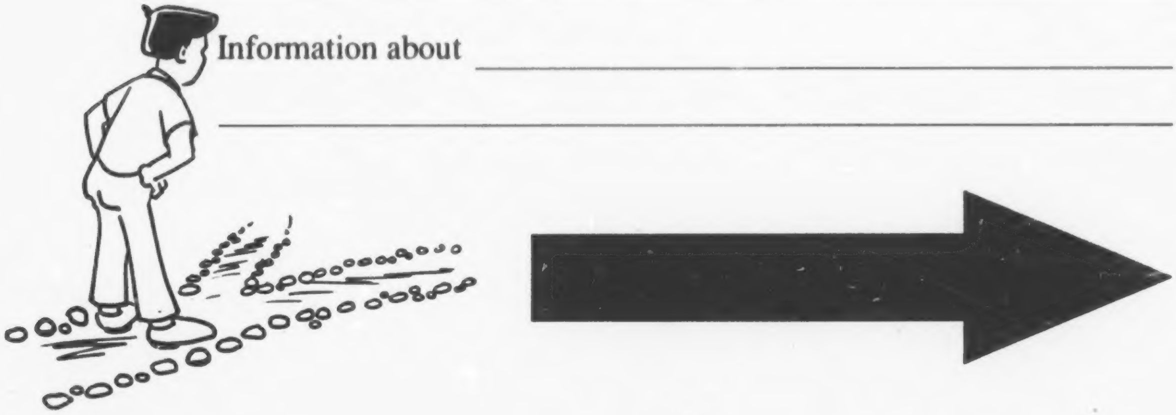
List at least 4 categories here:

Information about ______________________________
____

Information about ______________________________
____

Information about ______________________________
____

Information about ______________________________
____



Sometimes making decisions can be frustrating.

For weeks, Ryan has been working on his car. He has spent all his money and every available hour getting it fixed up for a custom car show. Now, the day before the show, some of his friends invite him to go with them to the river tomorrow. Ryan really enjoys going to the river, but he wants to enter his car in the show, too. Both things are happening on the same day. It makes him mad that he has to choose between two things he wants.

Has anything like this ever happened to you? How did you feel at the time?

What did you do?

Sometimes we decide not to decide.

The coach asks Tom if he wants to be on the track team, which makes Tom feel great, except that he is nervous about being the newest (and maybe the slowest) person on the team. So Tom puts off making a decision. Accidentally (on purpose), he forgets to let the coach know by the deadline. A day or two later, Tom says to himself, "Too bad I forgot about notifying Coach that I wanted to be on the track team. Oh, well."

Have you ever put off making a decision? If you could get that day back, what would you do this time?

Helping Your Children Learn to Solve Problems

As we go through life, we are confronted with problems and challenges. Some of these are very small and we see them as just a normal part of living. Others take on proportions that make them significant events in our lives. Decision making and problem solving are closely related. As a matter of fact, the ability to make quality decisions or choices is a major component of effective problem solving.

As with decision making, the first step in solving a problem is to define (or describe) exactly what the problem is. Sometimes feelings of discomfort tell us that we have a problem, but we avoid doing anything about it or blame it on someone or something outside ourselves. Defining the problem forces us to face it squarely. Next, we need to ask ourselves if this is a problem that we can handle alone. Perhaps before going any further, we could benefit by talking over this problem with someone we trust. This step is particularly important for children, who need to be reminded that they can turn to a parent or other trusted adult at any time. The next two steps in the problem-solving process involve thinking of possible solutions and then evaluating each one. As with decision making, we must weigh the advantages and disadvantages of each alternative. Finally, we choose the alternative or combination of alternatives that appears to have the best chance of solving the problem. The only thing that remains, then, is to put the solution into action. This may require planning and follow through. Children, in particular, need to be monitored to ensure that they actually implement their chosen solution.

Through the activities in this section, we not only want to help you develop problem-solving skills in your children, we want to teach them that each problem they encounter offers valuable learning for them as they work toward its solution. A wise person once said that problems should be viewed as opportunities because they teach us so much as we solve them.

Since problems are a part of living, learning how to go about solving them the best way possible is a valuable skill for *effective* living. All of us have plenty of opportunities to deal with problems, so it is easy to find real-life examples in all our lives wherein we can apply the concepts presented in this section.

Family Meetings provide an exceptional place for dealing with problems, taking advantage of the whole family as a resource in the process. When you share your problems with others, those people become resources to you in working out the best solutions. By bringing family members into the problem-solving process, you strengthen your family's bonds.

Use the following activities with your children to explore a variety of problem-solving strategies, and then apply the skills to problems with which your children are currently dealing. The activities describe examples of typical problems. Use them for practice, keeping in mind that real learning will take place when real problems are dealt with effectively using these strategies.

The ability to constructively solve problems will help things run more smoothly within the family and prepare children to function better in school as well as in jobs and relationships when they become adults. Like listening, giving praise, and decision making, your children will be able to take problem-solving skills with them throughout life.

66

LIFE SKILL: PROBLEM SOLVING

Guidelines and Activity Sheet

Action Plan for Solving Problems

Help your children to understand that they can solve many problems by following a few easy steps. Describe a theoretical problem that *you* might have, such as: *Why are my houseplants turning yellow and dying?* Cover the three steps for solving a problem in a fashion similar to that used in the example problem below.

1. **Describe the problem in as much detail as possible.** *The leaves on my houseplants started to turn yellow a month ago when we had such hot, dry weather. Even though I watered the plants every day, the leaves got yellower until the plants began to die.*
2. **List possible ways to solve the problem.** *I could: 1) look in a book about plants to learn about plant care and diseases, 2) ask a friend for advice, 3) call a plant store or nursery and describe the problem, or 4) throw out the plants and start over.*
3. **Choose the solution that seems best and try it out.** If it works, terrific. If it doesn't, try another solution. *I asked a friend, and she said to give my plants more water. The plants died. I wonder if I gave the plants too much water? I think I'll look in a book on plant care.*

Have each child solve his or her own problem. After the children have helped you with your theoretical problem, ask them to think of a problem *they* might have.

Make copies of the "Action Plan for Solving Problems" on the next page for each child. You may also write the three steps on a piece of paper. Help them think of a problem and work through each step.

Conclude the activity. Acknowledge the children for their problem-solving skills. Ask them:

—*Why is it important to know how to solve problems?*
—*How do you think this skill will help you in school? . . . in a job when you are an adult?*

Now, let each child practice with a problem of his or her own.

Next Page

Activity Sheet 67

Action Plan For Solving Problems

Do you have a problem? Do you want to solve it? Follow these steps. See if you can come up with a good solution. Happy thinking!

STEP 1: Describe the problem. Who or what is part of the problem? What is or is not happening? How do you feel about the problem? List all the details of the problem.

STEP 2: List all of the possible ways to solve the problem—even if they seem silly. Remember, one of the solutions can be to "ask for help."

STEP 3: Choose the solution you think is best and try it out. If it works, congratulations! If it doesn't, try the next-best solution. Keep trying your solutions until you find one that works.

68 LIFE SKILL: PROBLEM SOLVING
Activity Sheet

The Consequence Tree

Follow these directions:

1. Think of a problem that you can work on together as a family. Talk it over. Write a description of the problem below.

2. Together, brainstorm and list as many solutions to the problem as you can think of, even if they sound ridiculous. Use more paper if you have to.

3. Choose the four most workable solutions and write them on the branches of the **"Consequence Tree."**

4. Discuss the solutions one at a time. Talk about the best and worst things that could happen as a result of each solution. These results are called ***consequences***. Write the best and worst consequences below each solution.

5. Finally, weigh the consequences for each solution. Decide which solution will probably work best. Circle that solution and try it out. If it works, congratulations! Good teamwork! If it doesn't work, don't be discouraged. You have three more to try! Choose the next best solution and see what happens.

Problem: ______________________________

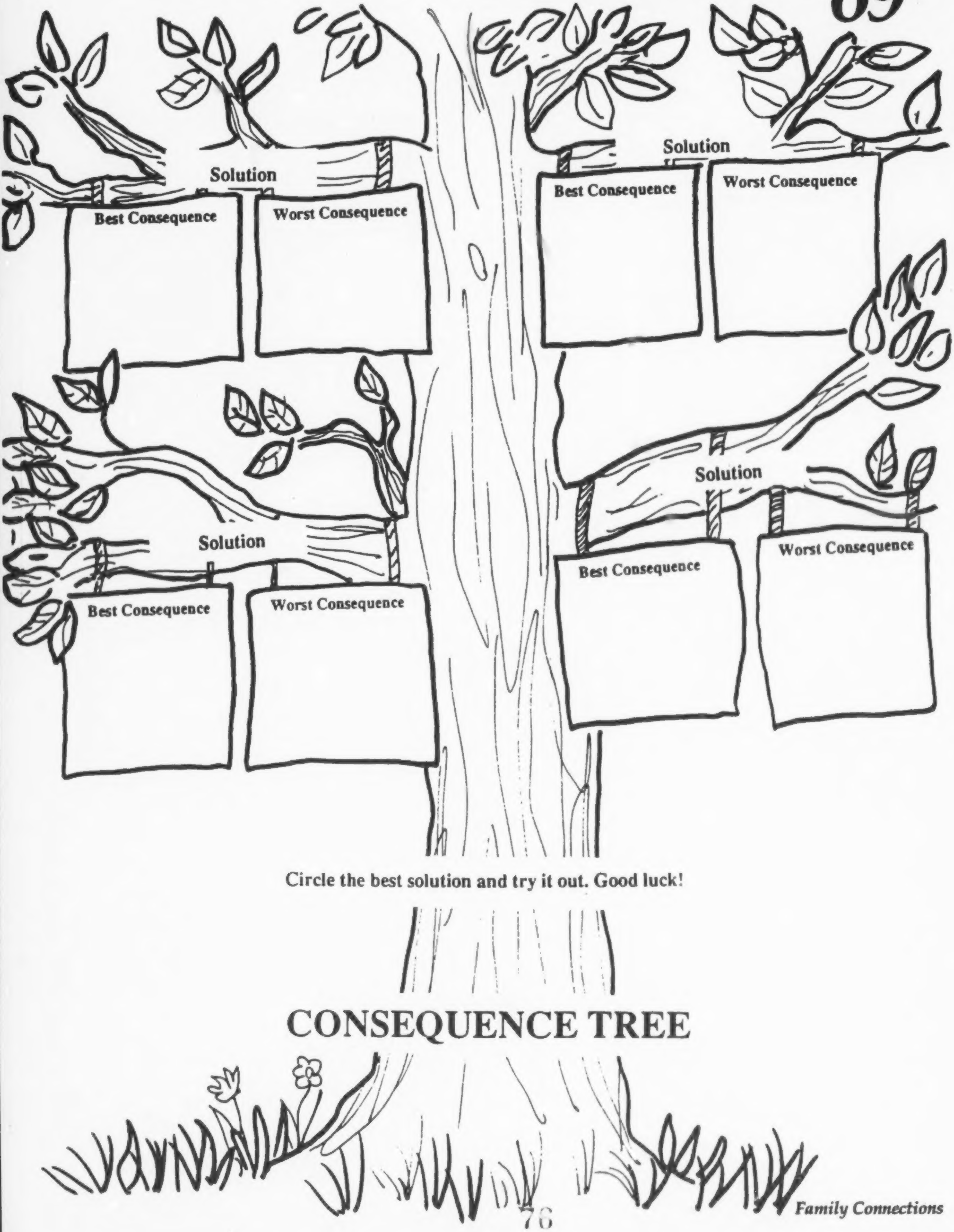
____

Possible Solutions (Go ahead, be creative!)

1. ______________________________
2. ______________________________
3. ______________________________
4. ______________________________
5. ______________________________
6. ______________________________
7. ______________________________
8. ______________________________
8. ______________________________
10. ______________________________

Put a check next to the 4 best solutions and write them on the Consequence Tree.

Continued


Solution
Best Consequence
Worst Consequence
Solution
Best Consequence
Worst Consequence
Solution
Best Consequence
Worst Consequence
Solution
Best Consequence
Worst Consequence

Circle the best solution and try it out. Good luck!

CONSEQUENCE TREE

Activity Sheet

Mazes, Not Traps!

Here are some questions about problems.
Write your answers in the space provided.

Have you ever had a problem you ignored until it got so big that you finally *had* to admit to yourself, "I've got a problem?"

Why did you try to keep your problem a secret—even from yourself? ________

____

____

Do you ever feel like you are the only person with problems? Has it ever occurred to you that everybody else is keeping their problems a secret, too? **Remember, *everybody* has problems.**

Have you ever criticized yourself or felt guilty because you had a problem?

Did the self-criticism make you feel better or worse? __________

Did it help solve your problem? __________

Do you know someone who almost always seems to be complaining, usually about the same one or two things over and over again, but never *does* anything about them?

How do you feel about this person's complaining? ____________________

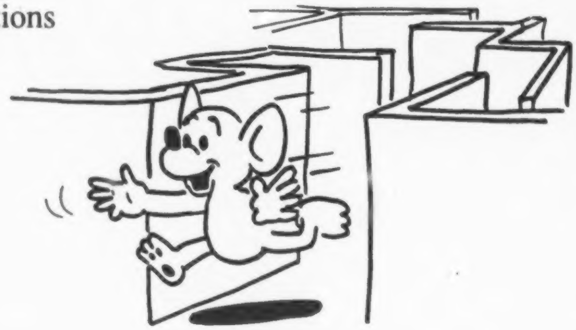
____

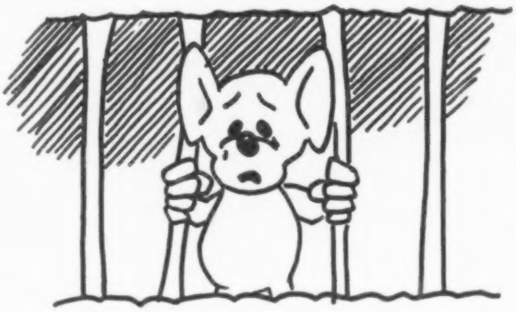
____

Next Page

Take a look at your problems.
Here's a list of problem areas. Do any of these items remind you of things that complicate your life? **Put a check (√) beside the items that bother or concern you the most.**

_____ being accepted by friends
_____ becoming independent
_____ living with controls and restrictions
_____ authority figures
_____ making decisions
_____ clothes
_____ figuring out who you are
_____ alcohol and/or other drugs
_____ taking on responsibilities
_____ being alone
_____ temptations
_____ lack of privileges
_____ grades
_____ hair
_____ things going on in the world
_____ sex
_____ money
_____ your body
_____ love
_____ confusion





One **BIG SECRET** to solving a problem is to see it for what it is. Some people look at a difficult situation and call it a trap. The truth is that there are lots of mazes, but very few traps. If you see your problems as mazes instead of traps, you work at finding solutions. You move. If you see only traps, you're stuck!

And remember—to find your way out of a maze, use these . . .

STEPS FOR SOLVING A PROBLEM RESPONSIBLY:

1. **Stop all blaming.**
2. **Define the problem.**
3. **Consider asking for help.**
4. **Think of alternative solutions.**
5. **Evaluate the alternatives.**
6. **Make a decision.**
7. **Follow through.**

72 LIFE SKILL: PROBLEM SOLVING

Activity Sheet

I Have Choices

Many times our fears don't allow us to see the "whole picture" when we have a problem to solve. Fear sometimes makes things look worse than they really are. Quite often these fears are unwarranted. We can work through these kinds of fearful situations by discussing them with others. Use this activity sheet as an opportunity to discuss different fearful situations and how and when to see fears as merely *False Evidence Appearing Real.*

F E A R = False Evidence Appearing Real

Think about times when you were afraid of someone or something and everything turned out okay. There was nothing to fear after all. It was only "false evidence appearing real." Make a list:

FEAR:	**WHAT REALLY HAPPENED:**
Example - *I thought I'd failed the test.*	*I passed the test.*

Helping Your Children With Goals

A goal is a destination, an outcome. Having goals gives purpose and direction to our efforts and activities. When you say to yourself, "Today I'm going to get the car washed, stop by the bank, and finish that book I started last week," you may not realize it, but you are setting short-term goals. You are creating within yourself the *intention* to complete those particular tasks within an established time frame—today. Most of us are very successful at setting and achieving short-term goals. Long-range goals are more challenging, requiring that we look from six months to several years into the future. Short-term goals only require that we know what we want to accomplish today, tomorrow, or next week. Setting long-range goals presupposes that we know what we want to accomplish with our life—or at least big chunks of it. Consequently all kinds of things go into setting and achieving long-range goals. For example, we need to be aware of our values, skills, and personal attributes; we need to structure our goals so that they don't conflict with one another, and we need to plan.

A goal is a destination; a plan is the map for getting there. Without a plan, a goal is not really a goal, it is merely a dream. Equally important is the willingness to follow through with the plans we make, and to overcome any problems that arise and threaten to throw us off track. When children know how to plan and to solve problems, they are significantly better able to set and achieve goals.

The activities in this section are designed to help children understand the goal-setting process and practice effective goal-setting behaviors. When children experience success in achieving the things they want in life, they are less susceptible to the lures of tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs, and less likely to engage in destructive behaviors.

To develop a sense of competence and self-worth, children need to consciously set goals and then engage in the planning and follow through necessary to achieving them. Goals need to be realistic and clearly stated, with their completion targeted for a specific date or time. If a child's goal is ambitious, it can usually be broken down into smaller goals that are easier to realize. The child will find that when all these small goals are achieved, he or she will have achieved the ambitious goal as well.

74 LIFE SKILL: GOAL SETTING

Activity Sheet

Reasons, or Results?

Often we have "excuses" or "reasons" for not achieving the goals we set. These "reasons" sabotage achievement. The following activity generates ways to deal with our "reasons" and provides fun for the whole family.

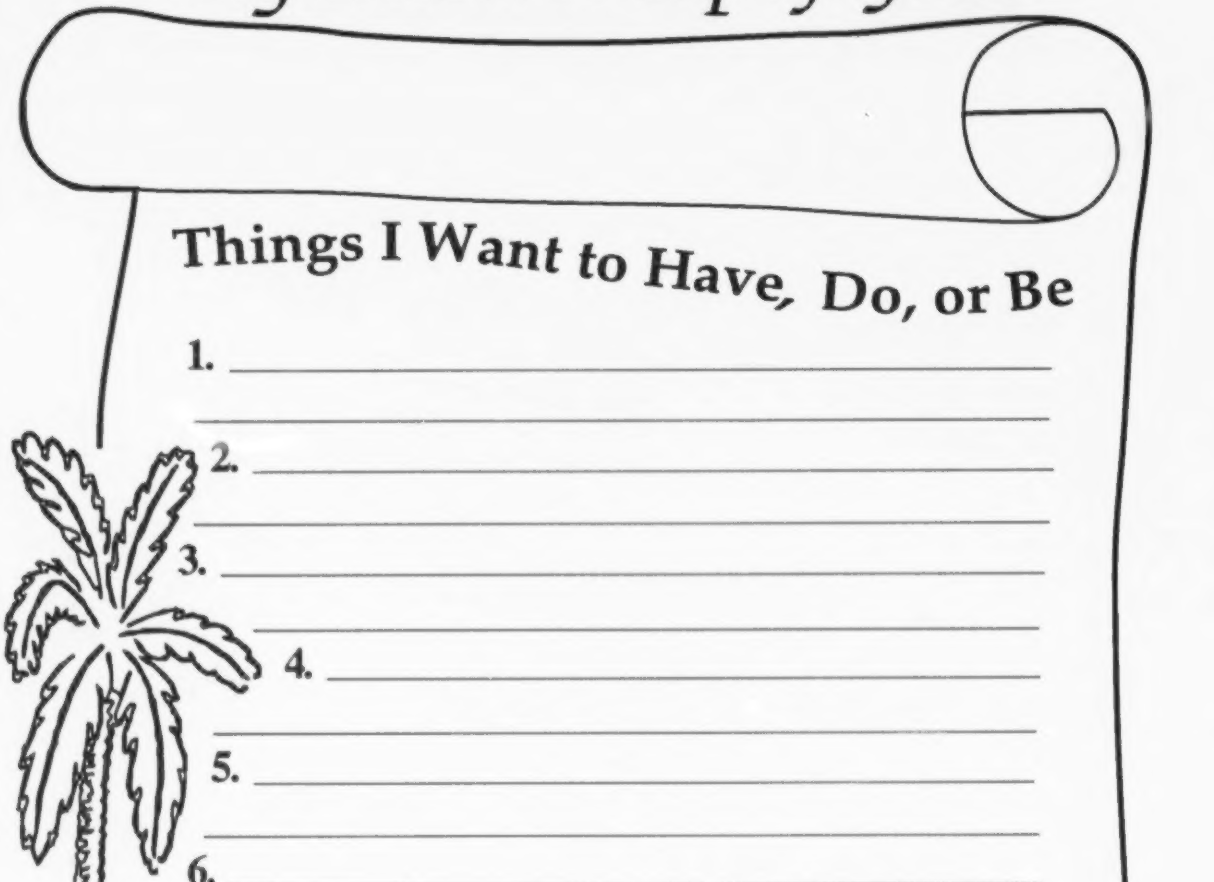
Role playing is a technique that simulates reality in a safe environment so you can help your children practice appropriate behavior and responses to difficult situations before they are confronted with the real situation. Since excuses can prevent our reaching a goal if we let them, use the following role-playing activity with your family to look for ways to succeed rather than fail.

Goal Setting: A Family Role-Play

1. Gather the family together. Give each member a pen and paper.
2. Have each person write down one goal. It could be "I want to be a straight A student," or "I want to be a famous musician (business tycoon, artist, scientist, athlete, pilot, etc.)," or "I want to travel all over the world."
3. Next, ask everyone to write down some reasons (or excuses) for not being able to reach that goal. Examples might be, "I don't have enough talent," or "If I can't be the best, I won't do it at all," or "I don't have enough money (time, energy, etc.)."
4. Ask family members to take turns reading their goals. Immediately after reading his or her goal, have each person act out all of the excuses that could stop him or her from achieving it. *(Encourage each person to really ham it up.)*
5. Explain that everyone in the family is now to be an "Encourager." Give all kinds of advice on how to reach the goal. Offer creative solutions. Don't allow any negative input.
6. After everyone has shared a goal and been encouraged to reach it, talk with your family about the experience. Ask questions like these:

   —*What excuses/reasons did we use most often?*
   —*Which suggestions seemed to be most helpful?*
   —*What methods can we use to encourage ourselves to reach our goals?*

My Treasure Map of Goals



Things I Want to Have, Do, or Be

1. ______________________________
2. ______________________________
3. ______________________________
4. ______________________________
5. ______________________________
6. ______________________________
7. ______________________________
8. ______________________________

Activity Sheet

My Personal Action Plan

Make a contract with yourself! **Fill out one of these for a goal you would like to reach:**

Contract: I, ______________________ have decided to work on

and achieve the goal of ______________________________

____

The first step I will take to reach this goal is to ______________

____

Other steps are: ______________________________

____

____

My target date for reaching this goal is ______________

Date __________ Signed ______________________

Signature of Witness: ______________________

How did you do?

My plan of action:

___ Worked very well, since I reached my goal.
___ Worked somewhat, since I nearly or partially reached my goal.
___ Did not work, since I failed to reach my goal.

My feelings about succeeding or failing: ______________________

____

I think I succeeded or failed because: ______________________

____

If I were to do it again, I would do the following things differently:

____

____

LIFE SKILL: GOAL SETTING

Activity Sheet **77**

Pep Talk to Myself

A goal I have is ______________________________

____

____

Sometimes achieving a goal becomes a difficult task. If you feel like giving up on your goal, what are some things you can do to pep yourself up?

____

____

____

____

____

What are some things that might stop you from reaching your goal?	What can you do to prevent these things from stopping you?
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	

Activity Sheet

Goal Achievement

Goals are written in special ways.

They are —

1. **Positive (They contain no negative words.)**
2. **Personal (They're about us, not others.)**
3. **Written as though they are happening now or have already happened. (Never write them as though they are "going to" happen.)**

Researchers tell us that when we write goals in this way we connect with the part of our brain that tells us what we need to do. Have you ever wanted to make something? If you have, you may remember that after you decided what it was you wanted to make (this was your goal) you started thinking of things you needed to have and other things you needed to do in order to make what you wanted (attain your goal). Not only did you think of all of these things, you were also able to put them into the order in which they needed to be done (the steps you take to achieve your goal). This happened because you used the part of your brain that acts on goals. The more often you set goals in this way, the more often you get what you want. Use the following guide to work on achieving a goal you have in mind. Be sure everything is positive, personal, and written as though it is happening NOW.

This is the goal I am attaining:

____

____

____

____

Continued

My Goal Achievement Score Sheet . . .

Now that you've written your goal, use the following form to write down the steps you'll need to take to achieve it. Number these steps, write them in the order they need to be done, and start working on completing the first one.

Steps Toward Achieving My Goal:

1. ____________________
2. ____________________
3. ____________________
4. ____________________
5. ____________________
6. ____________________
7. ____________________

It's a good idea to review your progress toward achieving your goal. Every week or two, take a look at the steps you've been working on. Use the following form. Enter the date of your review. If you've completed a step, put its number below the review date in the row marked "Step Achieved." Put the numbers of the steps not yet achieved in the "Step Not Achieved" row.

Review Date						
Step Achieved						
Step Not Achieved						

Make a fraction out of the number of steps you've achieved and the total number of steps you need to complete to reach your goal, and enter it under the review date in the row marked "Fraction Achieved." For example, if you have six steps written down and by the second review date, you've achieved three of them, your fraction would be three (Steps Achieved) over six (Total Steps), or 3/6. That would be half way toward achieving your goal.

Fraction Achieved						

Use this method to track any goal you want to achieve. It always makes you feel better about your goal and yourself when you can see that you are making progress.

Activity Sheet

A Picture of My Goal

One helpful thing you can do to help you reach your goal is to get a clear mental picture of what you want to achieve. Think about the goal you have. In the space below, draw a picture of you achieving your goal. Or paste in pictures from magazines that help you see your goal more clearly.

Stay on track. Keep this picture in your mind. Think about it often and you'll find yourself getting closer to your goal.

Helping Your Children to Say "No"

We cannot overstate the importance of teaching children resistance/refusal skills. Children learn very early that they are expected to obey their parents and teachers—in effect, to say yes. They are taught to behave in ways that are pleasing and agreeable to others. Understandably, children get plenty of practice saying yes, and sometimes develop a real inability to say no. They need to learn that sometimes a firm NO to someone else—particularly if that person is offering them something harmful—is a big YES to them.

By practicing resistance/refusal skills, your family will have an opportunity to judge each member's ability to say no and coach those most in need of supportive tips and concentrated practice. Be sure to practice saying no in a variety of hypothetical situations so that everyone is prepared for whatever real-life conditions present themselves. Children must have this practice *before* they encounter pressures to use nicotine, alcohol, and other drugs. Real skill and determination are required to overcome peer pressure while still maintaining friendships.

Experience has shown that one of the best ways to practice resistance/refusal skills is to role play. Role play (acting out a situation) will help your children internalize the different ways to say no, preparing them to respond easily and confidently when real-life situations arise. The activities on the following pages are designed to serve as practice sessions for your family. Schedule a 15- to 30-minute role play session at the end of several consecutive Family Meetings. Include as many family members as possible. After that, conduct a review session every two or three months.

Before you attempt to implement any of the activities provided, be sure to read the information on the following page, beginning with the heading, "What are Resistance/Refusal Skills?"

Guidelines and Information

What Are Resistance/Refusal Skills?

Resistance/refusal skills enable us to effectively resist pressure in all its forms and say no when we choose to.

All children are sure to encounter other kids and/or adults who will invite them (if not urge them) to use tobacco, alcohol and other drugs. In addition, they may be pressured to engage in a variety of activities that are unsafe, potentially harmful, or just plain wrong. To make certain that your child is equipped to make and carry out good decisions at times like these, you can:

1. Help your child develop confidence.
2. Reinforce your child's individuality (so that your child understands and exercises his/her right to make decisions that sometimes go against the decisions of the crowd).
3. Insist that your child practice resistance/refusal skills.

Information about Resistance/Refusal Skills

To say no convincingly, your child must look and sound confident and in control. Discuss these points with your child:

A person's facial expression and body language speak just as loudly as words. Always communicate self-confidence and a clear sense of purpose.

1. Maintain good posture, whether sitting, standing, or walking.
2. Face the other person and maintain eye contact.
3. Try to look proud, strong, and confident (even when feeling nervous or afraid).

Sound like you mean what you're saying.

1. Speak clearly, in a firm, steady voice.
2. Avoid phrases that convey uncertainty, such as, "I don't think so," or "I probably shouldn't."
3. Limit your responses to about 30 seconds.
4. Avoid debate. Refuse twice, then leave to avoid giving the the other person an opportunity to argue, plead, or persuade.

If you think you are in danger, leave immediately and seek help.

Activity Sheet 83

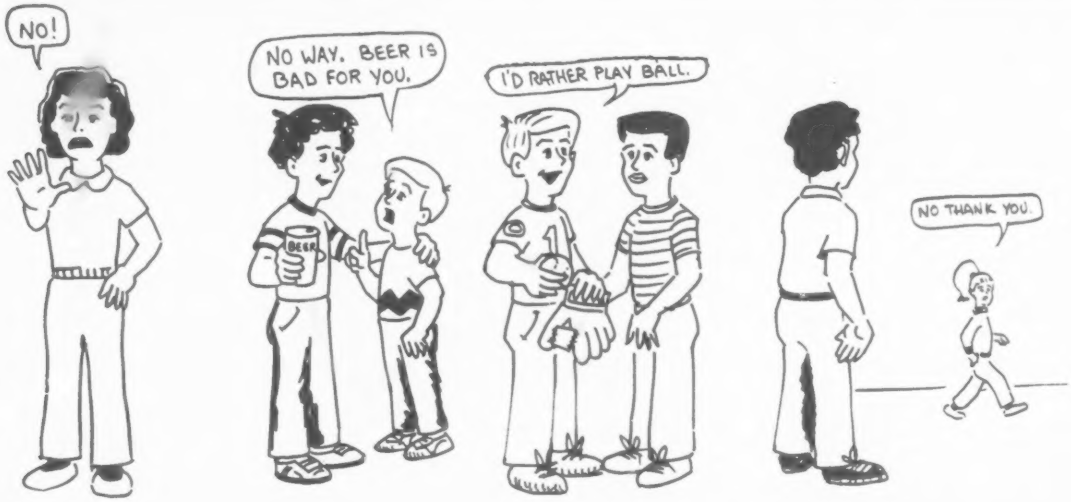
Four Ways to Say "No"

When someone asks you to do something that is wrong or dangerous, have the courage to say no. If someone offers you tobacco, alcohol, or another drug, say no. If someone asks you to do something that is wrong or dangerous, say no.

Here are four ways to say no. Use all four in the order they are presented, or pick the method you think will work best in the situation and use it by itself. If you think you are in danger, always use #4. **Leave!**

Here are four ways to say "no:"

1. **Say No.**
   Say it firmly. Or politely say, "No, thank you."
2. **Say no, and give a reason.**
   Explain why you are saying no. Use just a few words.
3. **Say no, and suggest something else to do.**
   Think of something safe and fun.
4. **Say no, and walk away.**
   If you are in danger, always leave. Go find someone who can help you.


NO!
NO WAY. BEER IS BAD FOR YOU.
BEER
I'D RATHER PLAY BALL.
NO THANK YOU.

84

LIFE SKILL: SAYING "NO"

Activity Sheet

A Game of Skill Development

There are dozens of ways to say no. This activity gives your family a chance to brainstorm and practice a wide variety of resistance/refusal skills in the context of an enjoyable game.

1. Have the family sit in a circle. (If there are only two of you, sit across from each other and take turns.)

2. Going around the circle, have each person demonstrate a method of saying no that hasn't been used by anyone else.
   - You can say no angrily, firmly, politely, or humorously.
   - Use facial expressions, substitute different words, stand up, stomp your foot, shake your head, etc.

3. Continue going around the circle until the family runs out of ideas.

4. End with a discussion about the importance of developing refusal skills. Ask questions such as these:

   —*What is meant by the term "resistance/refusal skills?"*

   —*Why is it important to spend time practicing resistance/refusal skills?*

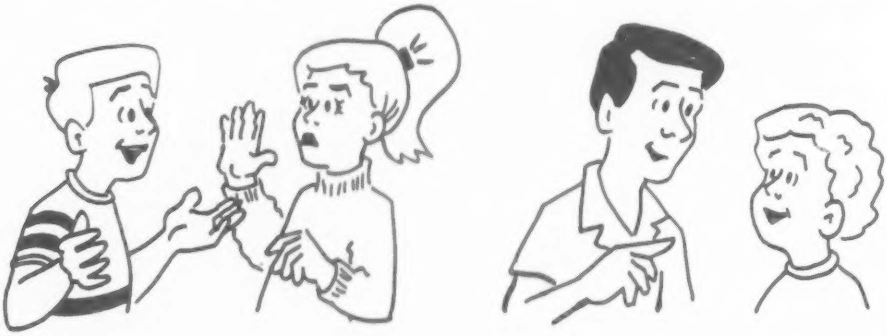
   —*Why is it hard to say no to an adult? ...to a friend?*

Activity Sheet 85

Practice, Practice, Practice

The best way to polish your skills is to practice them. This activity gives you an opportunity to role play situations for which you have specifically instructed your child to say no. Think of examples related to your family values and/or to incidents that have occured in the past—either to you or someone you know.

1. Think of situations in which you want your child to say no. For example:
    - a. Child is offered a chance to stay overnight with a friend but knows that the friend's parents will not be at home.
    - b. A stranger approaches the child and says, "Your parents sent me to pick you up."
    - c. Child's friend wants him or her to shoplift some candy from the local convenience store.
2. Describe a situation to your child, playing the role of the other person.
3. Have your child pick a method from the list, "Four Ways to Say 'No'" and say it to you.
4. Do this several times, using different situations.
5. Reverse roles. Invite your child to describe some situations to you. Show him or her that you know how to say no, too!



Activity Sheet

Read My Lips

Sometimes people won't accept your refusal. They'll keep trying to convince you to do the thing you don't want to do. Additional practice will give you the confidence and skill to stay in control when others are being insistent or strongly persuasive in response to your refusal.

Brainstorm situations in which you want to say no. Write them on 3-inch by 5-inch cards.

1. Have family members pair up and sit or stand facing each other.
2. Have each pair draw a card with a situation on it.
3. Have the pairs role play their situation.

One person plays the role of the **Convincer** and the other the **Resister** in each situation.. The Convincer is to try anything to get the Resister to "go along" in the situation.

The Resister is to resist verbally (using the "Four Ways to Say No") and practice leaving the scene. The Resister's voice, facial expression, and body language should be consistent with his/her refusal. Resister keeps responses short, does not invite discussion, maintains eye contact, and uses the Convincer's name for added emphasis: "No Samantha, I 'm not interested."

4. Partners switch roles so both get to be the Convincer and Resister in each situation.
5. Choose more cards with situations and continue to practice.
6. Talk about the exercise:

   — *How did you feel as the Convincer? ...Resister?*
   — *Did you feel like you had to explain your reasons for saying no?*
   — *Did resisting get any easier as you continued to practice?*

Learning About Tobacco, Alcohol, and Other Drugs

All of us are aware of the serious alcohol and drug problem in our country today. Even school age children have a concern. In a national survey conducted by Weekly Reader Periodicals, four out of ten sixth-graders said that there is pressure from other students to use alcohol and other drugs. Approximately 35 percent of fourth-graders believe that drinking is "a big problem" for their age group.

As a conscientious parent, you want to equip your child with the skills and self-confidence to deal effectively with the threat posed by drugs and alcohol. Peer pressure begins at an early age, so prevention efforts must begin early, too. In addition, children and teenagers develop many of their ideas about tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs from TV and movies.

Effective prevention strategies in the home are an outgrowth of the loving and caring relationship you have with your children. You can show your concern through listening, teaching and modeling standards of right and wrong, and establishing and enforcing rules of conduct, including rules pertaining to the use of tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs. Having in your possession factual information about tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs, and effectively presenting relevant facts to your children will help you counteract some of the influence of negative peer and media pressure.

Pre-schoolers are not ready for specific information about tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs. However, they *can* start learning some of the basics of decision making and problem solving, being guided, for example, to make healthy choices in matters that affect their physical well-being. In addition, pre-schoolers can learn about harmful substances kept in the home and the correct use of medicines.

Children in the early school years need rules to guide their behavior and information to help them make healthy decisions. Discussions about tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs must be in the here-and-now and about events and people the child knows, or knows about. A primary focus should involve teaching the child to take good care of himself or herself and to avoid products and situations that are potentially harmful.

During the late elementary years, children are naturally curious and want to know how things work. Socially, the child's peer group becomes very important. These are critical years when it comes to decisions about the use of tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs. Give your child factual information and a strong, clear "no-use" message.

Fitting in with peers captures the spotlight as the most important issue confronting your child during the early teen years. During these years, teens learn to understand that their actions have consequences and that their behavior affects others. Due in part to rapid physical and emotional changes, the self-image of your teenager may seem at times to reach an all time low. Be a good model and give your child strong emotional support.

Young people who use tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs usually begin to do so by the ninth grade. This is the time to emphasize the immediate unpleasant effects of drug use. Discussions about such things as bad breath or stained teeth are far more effective than warnings about cancer and heart disease—consequences that won't manifest themselves until several decades from now.

High school students are much more capable of thinking about the future. Though still peer oriented, older teenagers want to understand how adults solve problems and make decisions, and, if encouraged, will enter into productive discussions with adults. This is the time to focus on the long-term effects of tobacco, alcohol, and other drug use.

10 STEPS TO HELP YOUR CHILD SAY "NO"

1. *Talk With Your Child About Tobacco, Alcohol, and Other Drugs.*
   You can help change ideas your child may have that "everybody drinks, smokes, or uses other drugs."
2. *Learn To Really Listen to Your Child.*
   Your child is more likely to talk with you when you give verbal and nonverbal cues that show you are listening.
3. *Help Your Child Feel Good About Himself or Herself.*
   Your child will feel good when you praise effort, as well as accomplishments, and when you correct by criticizing the action rather than the child.
4. *Help Your Child Develop Strong Values.*
   A strong value system can give your child the courage to say "No" rather than listen to friends.
5. *Be A Good Role Model or Example.*
   Your habits and attitudes may strongly influence your child's ideas about tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs.

Facts About Tobacco

What tobacco is

All tobacco products—cigarettes, cigars, pipe tobacco, chewing tobacco, and snuff—are made from the leaves of the tobacco plant. For use in cigarettes, cigars, and pipes, the tobacco is shredded; for chewing tobacco, it is crushed; for snuff, it is ground into powder and sold in a can. The nicotine in tobacco is a stimulant drug.

How tobacco is used

When tobacco is smoked, nicotine and other chemicals are inhaled into the lungs and enter the bloodstream through the lung tissue. Chewing tobacco and snuff are held between the gums and teeth and sucked or chewed. The tobacco mixes with saliva to form a liquid, some of which is absorbed through the lining of the mouth and intestine.

Tobacco's effects

Smoking is the leading preventable cause of death in the United States. Approximately 170,000 people die each year from smoking-related coronary heart disease. Lung, larynx, esophageal, bladder, pancreatic, and kidney cancer also strike smokers at increased rates. Approximately 30 percent of cancer deaths (130,000 per year) are linked to smoking. Lung diseases such as emphysema and chronic bronchitis are 10 times more likely to occur among smokers than among nonsmokers. Passive or "second-hand" smoking causes an estimated 53,000 deaths per year.

Nicotine stimulates the central nervous system, increasing heart rate and constricting blood vessels. When blood vessels are narrowed, the free passage of blood and oxygen throughout the body is inhibited, causing the heart to pump harder to supply needed oxygen. As a result, smokers experience increased risk of heart disease, high blood pressure, and strokes.

Smoking during pregnancy can contribute to spontaneous abortion, preterm birth, low birth weights, and fetal and infant deaths.

Cigarette smoke contains approximately 4,000 chemicals, several of which are known carcinogens. Some of these are **tars,** which damage the delicate lung tissue and are considered the main cancer-causing agent in tobacco. Emphysema is caused by tar deposited on lung tissue. Other toxins and irritants found in smoke can produce eye, nose, and throat irritations. Ninety percent of all chronic lung diseases are directly attributed to smoking.

The most dangerous substance in tobacco smoke is nicotine. In addition to its role in the onset of heart attacks and cancer, nicotine reinforces and strengthens the desire to smoke. Because nicotine is highly additive, addicts find it very difficult to stop smoking. Withdrawal symptoms

6. *Help Your Child Deal With Peer Pressure.*
   A child who has been taught to be gentle and loving may need your "permission" to say "No" to negative peer pressure.
7. *Make Family Rules.*
   It's helpful when you make specific family rules about your child not using alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs. And it's helpful to tell your child the punishment for using them.
8. *Encourage Healthy, Creative Activities.*
   Hobbies, school events, and other activities may prevent your child from using alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs out of boredom.
9. *Team Up With Other Parents.*
   You can join other parents in support groups that will reinforce the guidance you provide at home.
10. *Know What To Do If You Suspect a Problem.*
   You can learn to recognize the telltale signs of alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use and get help.

Prepared by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. Reprinted by the Office for Substance Abuse Prevention.

include anxiety, irritability, lack of energy, and increased appetite, often for sweets.

People who do succeed in quitting can make significant strides in repairing damage done by smoking. For pack-a-day smokers, the increased risk of heart attack disappears after 10 years. The likelihood of contracting lung cancer as a result of smoking can also be greatly reduced by quitting.

Your children and smoking

The younger a person starts to smoke, the more likely he or she is to to become a heavy smoker, to remain a smoker for life, and to experience early mortality.

Tobacco is one of the "gateway" drugs. Its use is strongly correlated with the use of marijuana and other illegal drugs. Children who are most at risk for cigarette smoking are the same children who are at greatest risk for all other drug use in later life.

Seventy percent of all children experiment with cigarettes, 40 percent before they reach high school. They do so not to rebel, but to conform. Children see adults they admire smoking—at home, in movies, in advertising—and are invited to imitate them. Children with at least one parent who smokes are three times more likely to become regular smokers than children whose parents do not smoke.

Children need to be informed not only of the long-term dangers of smoking—cancer, heart disease, etc.— but of the dangers of passive smoking, the addictive nature of tobacco, and the more immediate harmful effects of smoking, such as:

- impaired physical fitness and athletic performance
- cough
- respiratory problems, such as asthma and bronchitis
- premature wrinkling of the skin
- reduced sense of taste and smell
- stained teeth and foul breath
- increased incidence of chest colds, pneumonia, and laryngitis

Media Influence and Teenage Smoking

The U. S. Centers for Disease Control concludes in a 1992 report that the cigarette brands purchased by teenagers "are among the most heavily advertised cigarette brands in the United States during 1990." Federal health officials estimate that about half of all adult smokers became regular smokers by their 18th birthday, and many health experts believe that these ads persuade young people to start smoking. The report goes on to say young people would be less exposed to tobacco advertising if print ads were limited to written text and a picture of the product, and if tobacco companies were forbidden to sponsor sporting events.

Facts About Alcohol

What alcohol is

Ethyl alcohol (C_2H_5OH) is the major active ingredient in alcoholic beverages, including beer, wine, and distilled spirits. Alcoholic beverages are obtained through the fermentation of sugar solutions, such as grape juice and various grains.

A 12-ounce can of beer, a 5-ounce glass of wine, and a 1 1/2 glass of 86-proof liquor all contain approximately 1/2 ounce of pure ethyl alcohol.

Facts About Teenagers and Drug Abuse

Over half of young people aged 12-17 have tried alcohol at least once. Of the 9 million who used alcohol within the past year, 3.7 million used it once a month and almost 1.2 million used alcohol once a week or more.

How the body processes alcohol

When alcohol is ingested, it is absorbed very rapidly into the bloodstream. Approximately 20 percent is absorbed through the lining of the stomach within seconds; the remainder is absorbed from the duodenum and small intestine, with blood concentration reaching its peak within 10 to 30 minutes.

Alcohol is distributed in almost equal concentration to all parts of the body. Approximately one hour is required for the effects of a single drink to wear off. Two hours are required for two drinks, three hours for three drinks, etc.

The effect of alcohol

Alcohol depresses (slows down) the brain and central nervous system. Its strongest effects are on the brain areas concerned with inhibition, memory, and sensation.

The consumption of even small amounts of alcohol can interfere significantly with the judgment and coordination required to drive a car safely, increasing the chances that the driver will be involved in an accident. Low to moderate doses of alcohol also increase the incidence of violent acts, including spouse and child abuse. Moderate to high doses of alcohol severely alter a person's ability to learn and remember information. Very high doses cause respiratory depression and death. If combined with other depressants of the central nervous system, much lower doses of alcohol will produce the same effects. Repeated use of alcohol can lead to dependence, or alcoholism.

The diseases associated with alcoholism make up the third leading cause of disability and death in the U.S. Long-term consumption of large quantities of alcohol, particularly when combined with poor nutrition, can lead to:

- Diseases of the digestive system, including varicose veins and cancer of the esophagus, gastric ulcers, duodenal ulcers, and gastritis.
- Pancreatitis (inflammation of the pancreas).
- Diseases of the liver, including alcoholic hepatitis, fatty liver, and cirrhosis of the liver—the seventh leading cause of death in the U.S.
- Neuritis (caused by alcohol's poisoning effect on the nerves of the arms and legs).
- Degeneration of cerebellum (the portion of the brain that controls equilibrium) resulting in permanent loss of coordination.
- Impotency in males.
- Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS), a combination of irreversible birth defects, including alcohol dependency; abnormalities of the heart, face, and head; mental retardation; and other physical abnormalities and central nervous system disorders.

In addition, alcohol is a contributing factor in:

- Accidents (20% of accidental asphyxiations, 20% of deaths from freezing, 25% of deaths from choking on foods, 50% of fire deaths, and over 60% of all fatal automobile crashes).
- Child and spousal abuse.
- Suicide (over 60% of all attempts whether successful or unsuccessful).
- Violent crime (over 70% of murders and other violent crimes).

Facts About Marijuana

What is marijuana?

Marijuana is the common name for a crude drug made from the plant *cannabis sativa*. The primary mind-altering ingredient in marijuana is THC (delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol); however, marijuana contains more than 400 other chemicals. The amount of THC in marijuana determines the strength of its effects. Today's marijuana is as much as ten times stronger than the marijuana used in the early 1970's.

How is marijuana used?

Marijuana is generally smoked, but may also be eaten. The individual user rolls the marijuana (dried particles of the whole plant) into cigarettes called "joints." Joints are irregular in shape, and the paper in which they are rolled is twisted or crimped at both ends. Marijuana is also smoked in pipes and waterpipes.

When smoked, marijuana enters the body through the respiratory system. The THC passes into the bloodstream from air sacs of the lungs. When eaten, marijuana is digested and the THC enters the bloodstream from the small intestine.

Immediate effects of using marijuana

Using marijuana causes a substantial increase in heart rate and blood pressure, bloodshot eyes, dry mouth and throat, and increased appetite.

Studies of marijuana's mental effects show that the drug can impair or reduce short-term memory, alter sense of time, and reduce the ability to do things that require concentration, swift reactions, and coordination, such as driving a car or operating machinery.

Other effects

Research shows that students do not retain knowledge when they are "high." Motivation and cognition may be altered, making the acquisition of new information difficult. Marijuana can also produce paranoia and psychosis.

Facts About Teenagers and Drug Abuse

Approximately 3.5 million (17.4%) young people aged 12-17 have tried marijuana; 2.5 million (12.6%) have used it within the past year. The 1.3 million (6.4%) who have used marijuana in the past month represent a 50% decrease since 1985.

Because users often inhale the unfiltered smoke deeply and then hold it in their lungs as long as possible, marijuana is damaging to the lungs and pulmonary system. Marijuana use may trigger susceptibility to diseases like asthma and chronic bronchitis. In addition, marijuana smoke contains more cancer-causing agents than tobacco smoke. Smoking three to five marijuana joints a week is equivalent to smoking sixteen cigarettes a day, seven days a week.

The accumulation of THC in the body's cells can lower the user's resistance to disease. It can also impair concentration, coordination, and vision, and cause sleep disturbances.

When THC accumulates in the cells of the reproductive system, it can restrict the growth of sperm-producing cells in males. Moderate to heavy marijuana use can result in infertility and impotence. In females, THC can impair ovulation and disrupt menstrual cycles. Increased testosterone levels in females can cause acne and the development of such male secondary sexual characteristics as hair on the chest, face, and arms. When used during pregnancy, marijuana is associated with lower birth weights and increased incidence of miscarriage.

Long term users of marijuana may develop psychological dependence and require more of the drug to get the same effect. The drug can become the center of their lives.

Facts About Depressants

What are depressants?

Depressants are drugs that depress or slow down the body's functions. Their effects are in many ways similar to those of alcohol. Small amounts can produce calmness and relaxed muscles, but somewhat larger doses can cause slurred speech, staggering movement, and blurred vision. Very large doses can cause respiratory depression, coma, and death. Combining a depressant with alcohol multiplies the effects—and the risks—of both drugs.

Barbiturates (such as Nembutal, Seconal, and Amytal), tranquilizers (such as Valium, Librium, and Equanil), and other depressants (such as Quaaludes) are prescribed by doctors in tablet or capsule form to calm down anxious people and to promote sleep.

Effects of depressants

The use of depressants can cause both physical and psychological dependence. Regular use over time may result in a tolerance to the drug, leading the user to increase the quantity consumed. When regular users suddenly stop taking large doses, they may develop withdrawal symptoms ranging from restlessness, insomnia, and anxiety to convulsions and death. Users who are psychologically dependent feel that they cannot function without the drug, and obtaining it becomes their main focus in life.

Babies born to mothers who abuse depressants during pregnancy may be physically dependent on the drugs and show withdrawal symptoms shortly after they are born. Birth defects and behavioral problems also may result.

Facts About Stimulants

What are stimulants?

Stimulants are comprised of several groups of drugs that tend to increase alertness and physical activity. The most commonly used stimulant is **caffeine**, a white, bitter, crystal-like substance found in coffee, tea, cocoa, and cola. **Cocaine** is also a stimulant, and has been dealt with in a separate section. The **amphetamines** (including **methamphetamine**) are a group of closely related stimulant drugs. In pure form, they are yellowish crystals; in manufactured form, tablets or capsules. Abusers also sniff the crystals or make a solution and inject it.

Amphetamines are prescribed by physicians to treat narcolepsy (a rare disorder marked by uncontrolled sleep episodes) and minimal brain dysfunction in children. They also are prescribed for short-term treatment of obesity.

Effects of stimulants

Stimulants cause increased heart and respiratory rates, elevated blood pressure, dilated pupils, and decreased appetite. In addition, users may experience sweating, headache, blurred vision, dizziness, sleeplessness, and anxiety. Extremely high doses can cause a rapid or irregular heartbeat, tremors, loss of coordination, and even physical collapse. An amphetamine injection creates a sudden increase in blood pressure that can result in stroke, very high fever, or heart failure.

In addition to the physical effects, users often feel restless, anxious, and moody. Higher doses intensify the effects. Persons who use large amounts of amphetamines over a long period of time can develop hallucinations, delusions, and paranoia. These symptoms usually disappear when drug use ceases.

Long-term, heavy use of amphetamines can lead to malnutrition, skin disorders, ulcers, and various diseases that come from vitamin deficiencies. Lack of sleep, weight loss, and depression also result from regular use. Frequent use of large amounts of amphetamines can produce brain damage that results in speech and thought disturbances. In addition, users who inject amphetamines intravenously can get AIDS and other serious, life-threatening infections from nonsterile equipment. Injecting amphetamines can cause lung or heart disease and other diseases of the blood vessels, which can be fatal. Kidney damage, stroke, or other tissue damage also may occur.

People who use stimulants regularly may develop a tolerance to the drug and need to take larger amounts to get the same effect. In addition, users may become psychologically dependent on stimulants, feeling that they are essential to normal functioning.

Facts About Cocaine and Crack

What is cocaine and how is it used?

Cocaine, a central nervous system stimulant drug, is extracted from the leaves of the coca plant, which grows in South America. Cocaine is usually a fine white crystal-like powder, although at times it comes in larger pieces which on the street are called rocks. Cocaine is usually sniffed or snorted into the nose, although some users inject it. Freebase is a purified form of cocaine which has been chemically altered so that it can be smoked.

Facts About Teenagers and Drug Abuse

Over 680,000 (3.4%) young people aged 12-17 have tried cocaine; over 590,000 (2.9%) have used cocaine within the past year; and 225,000 (1.1%) have used cocaine within the past month.

What is crack?

Crack is a form of freebase cocaine that can be inhaled or smoked. Baking soda, water, and heat are used to convert the cocaine. When heated, the mixture makes a crackling sound. Crack looks like small lumps or shavings of soap, but has the texture of porcelain.

Effects of cocaine and crack

Both cocaine and crack stimulate the central nervous system. Immediate effects include dilated pupils and elevated blood pressure, heart rate, respiratory rate, and body temperature. Occasional use of cocaine can cause a stuffy or runny nose, while chronic use can cause sores to develop in the lining of the nose.

Injecting cocaine with contaminated equipment can cause AIDS, hepatitis, and other diseases.

Cocaine and crack can produce psychological and physical dependency, a feeling that the user cannot function without the drug. In addition, tolerance develops rapidly. Crack is extremely addictive.

Cocaine and crack constrict the heart's blood vessels, making it work harder and faster to move blood through the body. The drugs can also interfere with the signals controlling the heart's pumping action. Any use can trigger rapid heartbeats, irregular heartbeats, heart attacks, cardiac arrest, and sudden death.

Although users with underlying heart problems or blood vessel disease may be most likely to suffer heart attacks or heart failure from cocaine and crack, new evidence suggests the drugs can affect young people with apparently healthy hearts. Cocaine, in all of its commonly used forms including crack, has been associated with sudden heart attacks in people under the age of 30, some of whom were using the drug for the first time.

Cocaine and crack can cause brain seizures, a disturbance of the brain's electrical signals, some of which regulate the heart and the muscles that control breathing. Studies have shown that susceptibility to seizures increases with repeated use of the drugs.

Use of cocaine and crack can cause feelings of restlessness, irritability, anxiety, and sleeplessness. In some people, even low doses may create psychological problems. People who use high doses of cocaine over a long period of time may become paranoid or experience what is called "cocaine psychosis." Cocaine psychosis is characterized by violent or erratic behavior, and/or hallucinations of touch, sight, taste, or smell. Evidence suggests that these symptoms appear more rapidly in crack users.

Facts About Teenagers and Drug Abuse

Over 5 million (24.7%) young people aged 12-17 have tried an illicit drug at least some time during their lives; 3.4 million (16.8%) have used an illicit drug within the past year; and almcst 1.9 million (9.2%) have used an illicit drug within the past month.

Facts About Inhalants

What are inhalants?

Inhalants are breathable chemicals that produce psychoactive (mind-altering) vapors. Many people don't realize that inhalants are drugs because most of them were developed for other legitimate purposes. Inhalants include solvents, aerosols, some anesthetics, and other chemicals. Examples are model airplane glue, nail polish remover, lighter and cleaning fluids, and gasoline. Aerosols that are used as inhalants include paints, cookware-coating agents, hair sprays, and other spray products. Anesthetics include halothane and nitrous oxide (laughing gas).

How do inhalants work?

Almost all inhalants produce sensations similar to alcohol intoxication. At lower doses, they may produce a sensation of mild stimulation. Continued use leads to loss of inhibition and control. High doses may result in unconsciousness.

Effects of inhalants

The immediate negative effects of inhalants include nausea, sneezing, coughing, nosebleeds, fatigue, lack of coordination, and loss of appetite. Solvents and aerosol sprays also decrease the heart and respiratory rates and impair judgment. Amyl and butyl nitrite cause rapid pulse, headaches, and involuntary passing of urine and feces. Long-term use may result in hepatitis or brain damage.

Deeply inhaling the vapors, or using large amounts over a short time, may result in disorientation, violent behavior, unconsciousness, or death. High concentrations of inhalants can cause suffocation.

Long-term use can cause weight loss, fatigue, electrolyte imbalance, and muscle fatigue. Repeated sniffing of concentrated vapors over time can permanently damage the nervous system.

Facts About Hallucinogens

What are hallucinogens?

Hallucinogens are drugs that affect a person's perceptions, sensations, thinking, self-awareness, and emotions. Hallucinogens include such drugs as **LSD**, **mescaline**, **psilocybin**, and **PCP**.

LSD is a synthetic drug that is manufactured from lysergic acid, a fungus that grows on rye and other grains. LSD is odorless, colorless, and tasteless. It is sold on the street in tablets, capsules, or occasionally in liquid form.

Mescaline comes from the peyote cactus and although it is not as strong as LSD, its effects are similar. Mescaline is usually smoked or swallowed in the form of capsules or tablets.

Psilocybin comes from certain mushrooms. It is sold in tablet or capsule form so people can swallow it. The mushrooms themselves, fresh or dried, may be eaten.

PCP (phencyclidine) was developed as an anesthetic in the 1950's, but was taken off the market because it sometimes caused hallucinations. PCP is available as a pure, white crystal-like powder, or in tablet or capsule form. It can be swallowed, smoked, sniffed, or injected.

Effects of hallucinogens

The effects of LSD, mescaline, and psilocybin are unpredictable, and are dependent on the amount taken, the user's personality, mood, and expectations, and the surroundings in which the drug is used. Typically the user feels the first effects of the drug 30 to 90 minutes after taking it. Physical effects may include dilated pupils, elevated body temperature, increased heart rate and blood pressure, loss of appetite, sleeplessness, and tremors.

Sensations and feelings may change rapidly. The user may feel several different emotions at once or swing rapidly from one emotion to another. It is not uncommon to have a bad psychological reaction to LSD, mescaline, and psilocybin. The user may experience panic, confusion, suspicion, anxiety, and loss of control. Delayed effects, or flashbacks, can occur even after use has ceased.

The effects of PCP include increased heart rate and blood pressure, flushing, sweating, dizziness, and numbness. When large doses are taken, effects include drowsiness, convulsions, and coma. Taking large amounts of PCP can also cause death from repeated convulsions, heart and lung failure, or ruptured blood vessels in the brain.

PCP can produce violent or bizarre behavior, which can lead to self-inflicted injuries or accidental death—from drownings, burns, falls, and automobile accidents. Chronic users of PCP report persistent memory problems and speech difficulties. Some of these effects may last 6 months to a year following prolonged daily use. Mood disorders, including depression, anxiety, and violent behavior, also occur. In later stages of chronic use, users often exhibit paranoid and violent behavior and experience hallucinations.

Facts About Anabolic Steroids

What are anabolic steroids?

Anabolic steroids are a group of powerful drugs that are synthesized from the male sex hormone *testosterone*. Developed in Europe in the 1930's, steroids have been used medically to rebuild body tissue following severe accidents, surgery, or infection, and to treat men who are deficient in the principal male hormone, testosterone. At the present time, steroids are used by doctors to treat certain types of anemia, severe burns, and some forms of breast cancer.

Steroids are produced in tablet or capsule form. In liquid form, they are injected directly into the muscle.

What is steroid abuse?

Taken in combination with a program of muscle-building exercise and diet, steroids may contribute to increases in body weight and muscular strength. Because of these properties, athletes in a variety of sports have used steroids since the 1950's, hoping to enhance performance. Once restricted to world-class powerlifters and weightlifters, steroids have made their way into sports as varied as football, track, basketball, and swimming. There are now reports of widespread use by college and even high school athletes, both male and female.

Risks of steroid abuse

Steroid users subject themselves to more than 70 side effects ranging in severity from liver cancer to acne and including psychological as well as physical reactions. The liver and the cardiovascular and reproductive systems are most seriously affected by steroid use, and though some side effects appear quickly, others, such as heart attacks and strokes, may not show up for years.

In addition to cancer, liver malfunctions linked to steroid use include jaundice and cysts, which may rupture, causing internal bleeding and liver failure.

Studies have shown that athletes who used steroids developed higher blood pressure and higher blood fat ratios and cholesterol than non-users, increasing the risk of heart attacks.

In males, use can cause withered testicles, sterility, and impotence. In females, irreversible masculine traits such as deepening of the voice and development of facial hair can develop, along with breast reduction, menstrual irregularities, and sterility. Babies born to women who have used steroids during pregnancy may suffer from birth defects.

Psychological effects in both sexes include inappropriate anger and irrationally destructive behavior known as "roid rage" and depression. Although anabolic steroids are not usually considered physically addictive, reports indicate that heavy users can become psychologically dependent on them, convinced that steroids are essential to effective athletic performance.

Facts About Narcotics

What are narcotics?

The term narcotic generally refers to **opium** and pain-killing drugs made of opium, such as **heroin**, **morphine**, and **codeine**. Heroin, a white powder made from morphine, is the most important of the illicit narcotic drugs. It is not used in any form of legal medical practice. Other narcotics such as meperidine (Demerol), are synthesized or manufactured.

Effects of narcotics

Narcotics initially produce a feeling of euphoria, followed by lethargy, drowsiness, confusion, nausea, vomiting, and depression of the heart and breathing. Users also may experience constricted pupils, watery eyes, and itching. An overdose may produce slow and shallow breathing, clammy skin, convulsions, coma, and possible death.

Tolerance to narcotics develops rapidly and dependence is likely. When a narcotic-dependent person stops taking the drug, withdrawal usually begins within four to six hours after the last dose. Withdrawal symptoms include uneasiness, diarrhea, abdominal cramps, chills, sweating, nausea, and runny nose and eyes. The intensity of withdrawal symptoms depends on how much of the drug was taken, how often, and for how long.

The use of contaminated syringes may result in disease such as AIDS, endocarditis, and hepatitis. Addiction in pregnant women can lead to premature, stillborn, or addicted infants who experience severe withdrawal symptoms.

Signs and Symptoms of Alcohol/Drug Abuse

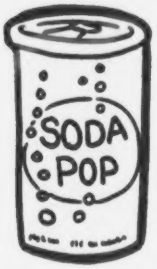
- chronic lying about activities and whereabouts
- disappearance of money or valuables from home
- marked unexplained mood changes
- abusive behavior toward self or others
- frequent angry outbursts
- bicycle, auto, or other accidents
- frequent truancy
- poor academic performance
- drugs or drug paraphernalia in room, clothes, or car
- drug terminology in conversations and/or school notebooks
- noticeable change in peer group; new friends are known or suspected drug users
- little energy, always tired
- chronic dry, irritating cough
- chronic sore throat
- chronic conjunctivitis (red eyes) with no identified cause

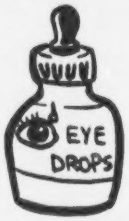
LEARNING THE FACTS

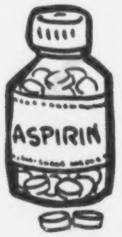
Activity Sheet 103

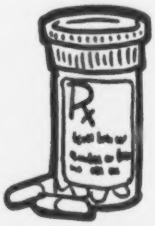
Which Are Medicines?

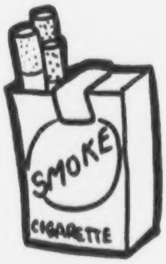
Look at the pictures below. Some of these things are medicines and some are not. Put a red circle around the medicines. Put a blue circle around those things that are not medicines.

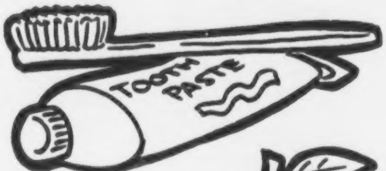


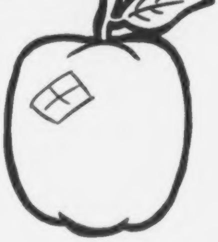


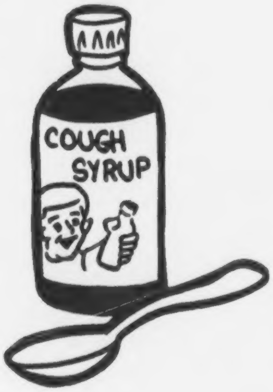


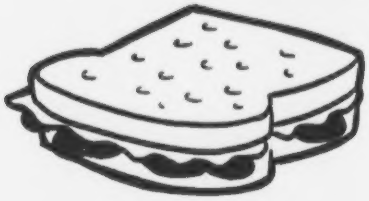












Should you take medicines by yourself? ________________________

Should you take medicine if you don't need it? ______________________

Are the directions on a medicine bottle important to follow? ____________

Should medicine be kept away from very young children? ______________

Remember these important Medicine Tips:

1. **Medicine should be taken only when needed.**
2. **Only take medicine from an adult who cares for you.**
3. **Always follow the directions on the label of the medicine bottle.**
4. **Keep medicines out of the reach of young children.**

Family Connections

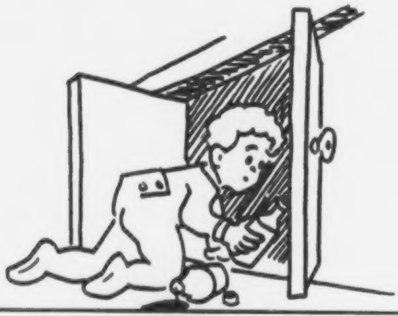
104

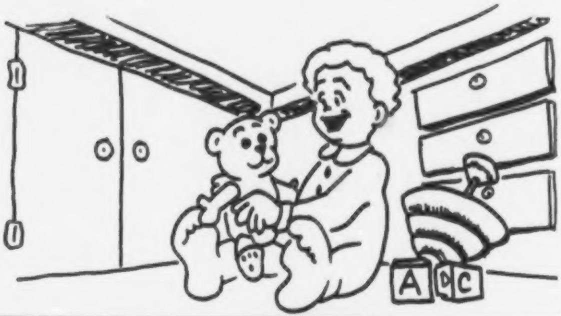
LEARNING THE FACTS

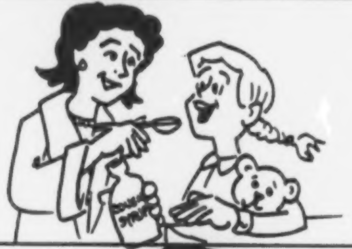
Activity Sheet

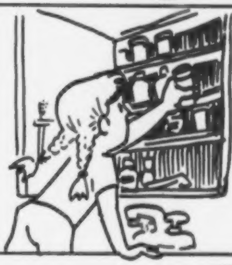
Making Safe and Healthy Decisions!

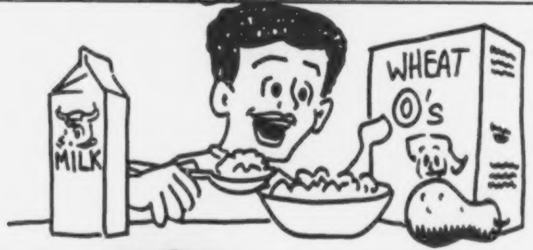
Please help your child or children complete this worksheet. The four pairs of pictures below represent good and bad decisions. Ask your child to describe to you what is happening in each picture. Then have him or her draw a circle around the picture in each pair that represents a safe and healthy decision. Ask your child to explain *why* the decisions represented in the circled pictures are safe and healthy.

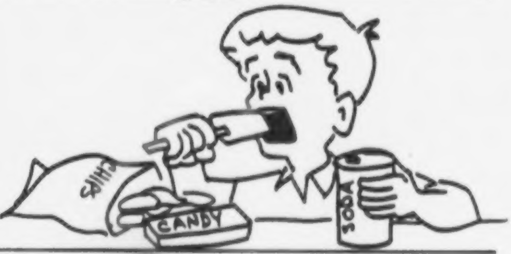


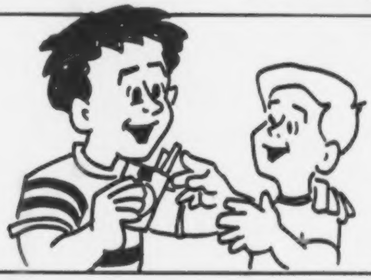


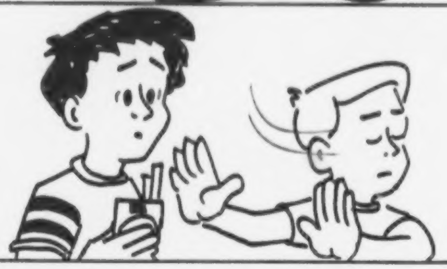








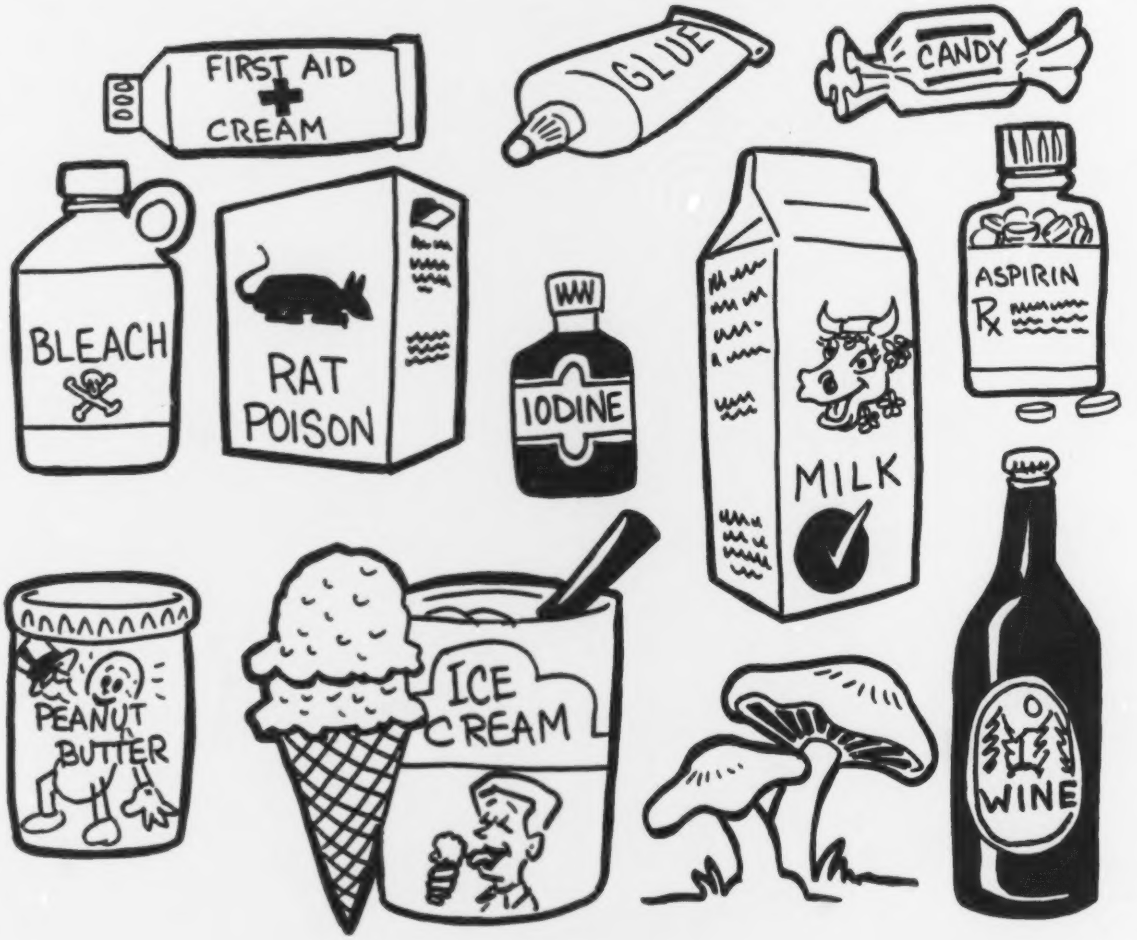




Danger! Danger!

One of the most important things any child can learn is how to avoid danger. Talk with your child about how the dangerous substances illustrated below could hurt him or her if swallowed. Discuss other toxic or poisonous substances, too. In addition, you may wish to take this opportunity to caution your child against other dangerous practices, such as getting into a car with a stranger.

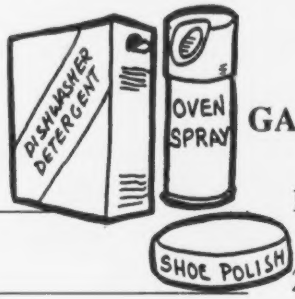
Ask your child which of these things will hurt him or her if swallowed. Have your child draw an X through the pictures that show dangerous things.


FIRST AID CREAM
GLUE
CANDY
BLEACH
RAT POISON
IODINE
MILK
ASPIRIN
Rx
PEANUT BUTTER
ICE CREAM
WINE

106 Activity Sheet

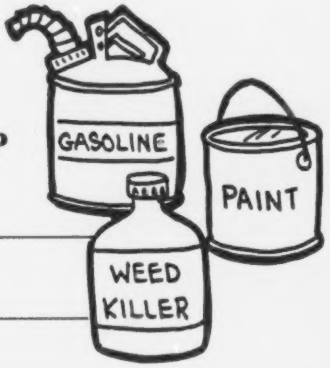
Be a Household Detective!

Many household products contain dangerous drugs or poisons. Together with your child, go through the rooms in your home where household products are kept. These may include the kitchen, garage, bathroom, laundry room, and workshop. Don't rush. Go through each room on a different day. Help your child list the products that you find in the room. Read the labels together and discuss what each product is used for, the dangers of ingesting or inhaling the product, and the remedies or treatments described.


DISHWASHER DETERGENT
OVEN SPRAY
SHOE POLISH

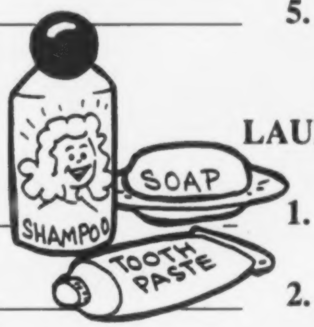
KITCHEN

1. ______________________________
2. ______________________________
3. ______________________________
4. ______________________________
5. ______________________________


GASOLINE
PAINT
WEED KILLER

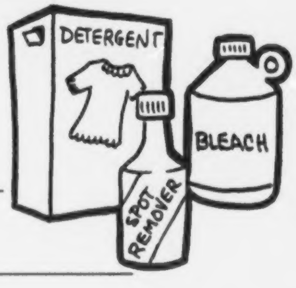
GARAGE/WORKSHOP

1. ______________________________
2. ______________________________
3. ______________________________
4. ______________________________
5. ______________________________


SHAMPOO
SOAP
TOOTH PASTE

BATHROOM

1. ______________________________
2. ______________________________
3. ______________________________
4. ______________________________
5. ______________________________


DETERGENT
BLEACH
SPOT REMOVER

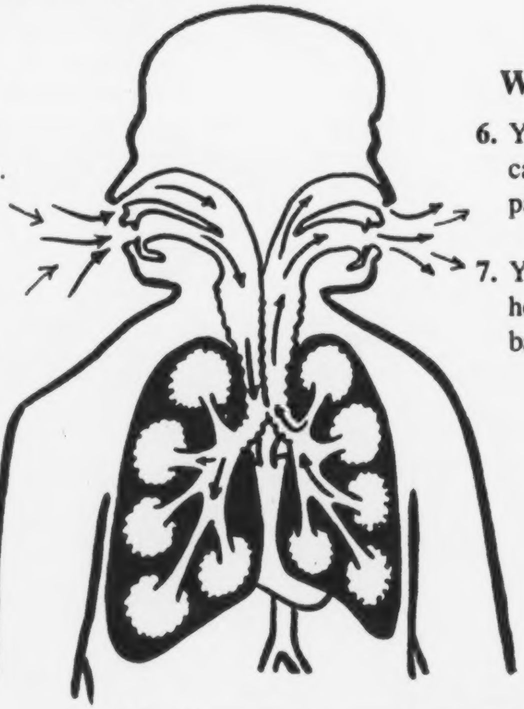
LAUNDRY ROOM

1. ______________________________
2. ______________________________
3. ______________________________
4. ______________________________
5. ______________________________

How Our Breathing Works

When you breathe in:

1. Your chest expands and your lungs fill with oxygen.
2. Blood cells inside your lungs absorb the oxygen.
3. Blood from the lungs goes to your heart.
4. Your heart pumps the blood throughout your body.
5. The oxygen in your blood cells help to keep your body healthy.



When you breathe out:

6. Your blood cells carry away carbon dioxide (CO_2) from all parts of your body.
7. Your blood returns to your heart and your heart pumps it back to your lungs.
8. Your blood cells return the carbon dioxide to air inside your lungs.
9. Your chest is squeezed smaller and the air that is full of carbon dioxide is squeezed out.
10. If you smoke, you also breathe in tar and chemicals that can't be squeezed out with the air. They stay in your lungs and can cause cells to change. Some of these changed cells may become cancer.

Try This:

Place both hands on your rib cage. Take a deep breath and feel your lungs expand as they take in air. Now exhale and feel the lungs get smaller again. Try it several times.

How does it feel to be able to breathe deeply and feel your lungs fill with fresh air?

Imagine what it would feel like if you smoked. Your lungs would be full of tar and you couldn't take a deep breath. Write down how you think that would feel:

List some reasons why you think it's smart never to start smoking or use tobacco in any form:

108 Activity Sheet

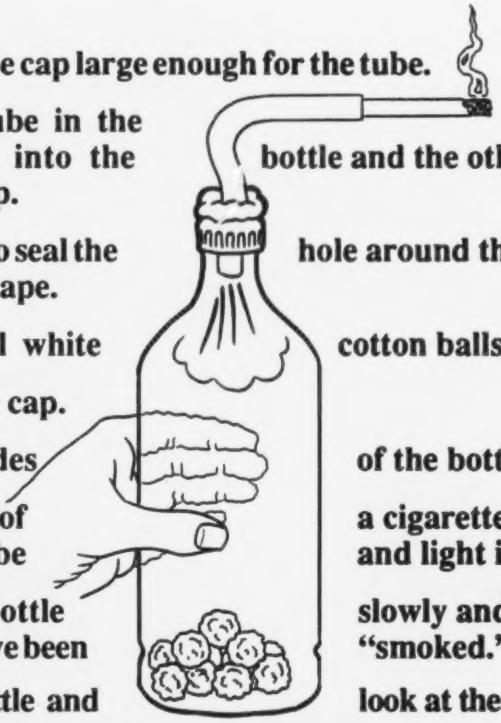
Effects of Smoking

By making a "Smoking Machine" your children will graphically see what smoking does to the lungs. The negative effects of smoking on the lungs will be clearly seen and will help your children make the decision not to smoke.

Materials Needed:

1. **medium size, soft, clear plastic bottle with cap**
2. **cotton balls**
3. **3-inch tube approximately the same diameter as a cigarette**
4. **small amount of modeling clay**
5. **matches**
6. **six cigarettes**

Directions:



1. **Cut hole in the cap large enough for the tube.**
2. **Insert the tube in the hole so one end extends into the bottle and the other end sticks out above the cap.**
3. **Use the clay to seal the hole around the tube so that no gases can escape.**
4. **Place several white cotton balls inside the bottle.**
5. **Screw on the cap.**
6. **Press the sides of the bottle to force out the air.**
7. **Place the end of a cigarette in the protruding end of the tube and light it with a match.**
8. **Pump the bottle slowly and steadily until all six cigarettes have been "smoked."**
9. **Open the bottle and look at the cotton balls.**
10. **Have a discussion with your children by asking, *What do you think cigarette smoking does to the inside of your lungs?***

An Important Letter to Me

Dear Me:

I don't use drugs. Why? Because I'm the only me I've got. Here are some things I do to take care of myself:

I feel good about myself. I put myself up—not down. When I make a mistake, instead of calling myself names, I learn something from it. If I need a hug, I ask for one. Something about me that I feel especially good about today is:

I stay informed. I know what's legal and what's not legal. I know about different kinds of drugs. And I know what can happen to me and my family if I use them. One thing that can happen is:

I stand up for myself. If someone asks me to do something I know is wrong or illegal, I say no. When a friend asks me to do something, I do 3 things:

1. Decide if it's right or wrong.
2. If it's wrong, say no.
3. Suggest something else that we can do.

And I tell my friend: *Take care of yourself. You're the only you you've got!*

Love,

P.S. Every time I say NO to drugs, I'm saying YES to me!

Learning About Media Influences

The ads that appear on television and the radio, in magazines, on billboards, and in stores sell images more than they sell products. These images suggest that if we buy and use the product advertised we will be sexy, happy, healthy, popular, etc. Tobacco and alcohol companies spend billions of dollars to promote images and beliefs that in turn sell their products. What doesn't show up is the truth about how the use of tobacco and alcohol affects our health. The ads utilize a range of tricks to get us to think about anything *but* our health. Don't be fooled. Discuss with your children what the ads are really saying, and what they are leaving out.

It's All About Money

Cigarette companies spend nearly $3 billion a year to promote the sale of tobacco products. Approximately $1 billion is spent developing ad campaigns that show tobacco use as healthy and desireable, enticing youthful nonusers to become users. Another $650 million goes to retailers in promotional allowances so that store owners will prominently display tobacco products and advertising in their stores. The remaining money is spent for various promotional endeavors such as premiums, testimonials, public entertainment, direct-mail promotions, and street-corner and mail-order samplings, a strategy that involves handing out samples to willing consumers, regardless of age. Tobacco companies also sponsor or support many sporting events, such as tennis tournaments, auto races, and basketball games. Although tobacco advertising has been banned on television for health reasons, tobacco companies effectively circumvent the ban through their sponsorship of televised athletic events.

DID YOU KNOW?

American children, ages 5-12, watch about five hours of commercials in one week of television viewing. By age 21, a person in our society will have seen one million commercials. That's a lot of sales pitches, and it doesn't include radio, newspaper, or magazine ads (from *The Media MessAge*, a publication of Train of Thought, Inc., P.O. Box 311, Redmond, WA 98073-0311).

The Ad Grab

This activity is an anti-ad campaign that reveals the way tobacco and alcohol ads attempt to fool people. Knowing the truth about advertising can equip us to say no to tobacco and alcohol products.

Materials You'll Need:

Magazines with advertisements for alcohol, cigarettes and other tobacco products; paper, scissors, glue, and felt-tip markers.

Directions:

1. Talk with your child or children about some of the techniques that tobacco and alcohol companies use to sell their products in magazine advertisements. Look at and discuss examples from the magazines as you identify the following advertising tactics:
   - Wealth (The product will make you look rich.)
   - Escape (The product puts you in harmony with nature.)
   - Romance (The product will make you more attractive to the opposite sex.)
   - Glamor girl (The product will make you beautiful.)
   - Macho man (The product will make you rugged and carefree.)
   - Athletic (This is what the pros use.)
2. Have each child select one of the magazine ads. Ask the child to trim the ad neatly and glue it to the paper. Next, have the child identify the ways in which the ad tries to "hook" or "grab" the reader so that the reader will want to buy the product. Then, make up a short statement that reveals the truth about the product in order to "unhook" the reader. For example, if your child's ad shows a picture of a glamorous woman smoking, he or she could say, "This won't make you attractive, it will only make you stink." Have the child write the statement in bright-colored markers beside, above, and below the ad.
3. Encourage your child to be creative. Expect (and accept) gruesome statements as long as they are true and appropriate.

Where to Get Information and Help

Many hospitals, community colleges, and other organizations offer classes for parents that are designed to improve communication and understanding between parents and children. Consult your local library, school, or community service organization for more information.

Action. Through its Drug Alliance, the Federal Domestic Volunteer Agency promotes community-based, volunteer drug use prevention projects for at-risk youth and the elderly. (See your telephone Blue Pages.)

Alcoholics Anonymous. This organization is a fellowship of men and women who share their experiences to solve a common problem (alcoholism) and to help other alcoholics achieve sobriety. The organization is worldwide. (See your telephone White Pages.)

Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters. Al-Anon was established as a resource for family members and friends of alcoholics. It is a free, nonprofessional, worldwide organization with more than 30,000 groups. (See your telephone White Pages.)

American Council for Drug Education. This organization provides information on drug use, develops media campaigns, reviews scientific findings, publishes books and a newsletter, and offers films and curriculum materials for pre-teens. 204 Monroe Street, Rockville, MD 20850. Telephone (301) 294-0600.

Chemical People Project. This project supplies information in the form of tapes, literature, and seminars. The Public Television Outreach Alliance, c/o WQED-TV, 4802 Fifth Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15213. Telephone (412) 391-0900.

"Just Say No" Clubs. These clubs provide support and positive peer reinforcement to youngsters through workshops, seminars, newsletters, and a variety of activities. 1777 North California Boulevard, Suite 200, Walnut Creek, CA 94596. Telephone 1-800-258-2766/(415) 939-6666.

National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information (NCADI). NCADI is a resource for alcohol and other drug information. It carries a wide variety of publications dealing with alcohol and other drug abuse. Box 2345, Rockville, MD 20852. Telephone (301) 468-2600.

National Federation of Parents for Drug-Free Youth, Inc. This organization sponsors the National Red Ribbon Campaign to reduce the demand for drugs and the Responsible Adolescents Can Help (REACH) program designed to educate junior and senior high school students about drug abuse. Communications Center, 1423 North Jefferson, Springfield, MO 65802. Telephone (417) 836-3709.

National PTA Drug and Alcohol Abuse Prevention Project. Offers kits, brochures, posters, and other publications on alcohol and other drugs for parents, teachers, and PTA organizations. 700 North Rush Street, Chicago, IL 60611. Telephone (312) 577-4500.

Toll-Free Information

1-800-COCAINE—A COCAINE HELPLINE

A round-the-clock information and referral service. Recovering cocaine-addict counselors answer the phones, offer guidance, and refer drug users and parents to local public and private treatment centers and family learning centers.

1-800-NCA-CALL—NATIONAL COUNCIL ON ALCOHOLISM INFORMATION LINE

The National Council on Alcoholism, Inc., is a national nonprofit organization that combats alcoholism, other drug addictions, and related problems. The council also provides referral services to families and individuals seeking help with alcoholism or other drug problems.

1-800-241-7946—PRIDE DRUG INFORMATION HOTLINE

A national resource and information center, Parents' Resource Institutes for Drug Education (PRIDE) refers concerned parents to parent groups in their state or local area; gives information on how parents can form a group in their community; provides telephone consultation and referrals to emergency health centers; and maintains a series of drug information tapes that callers can listen to, free of charge, by calling after 5:00 p.m.

1-800-622-HELP—NIDA HOTLINE

NIDA Hotline is a confidential information and referral line that directs callers to cocaine abuse treatment centers in the local community. Free materials on drug abuse are also distributed in response to inquiries.

Family Fun Involving Everyone

Participation in family activities promotes more loving relationships and improves communication between parents and children. The activities described in this section encourage closeness and collaboration and don't require a lot of money. Use them and create some of your own. You'll learn more about each other and have fun in the process.

Places to Go, Things to Do, People to See

Design Your Own Holidays

Ask your family to help you brainstorm different ways to celebrate traditional holidays. In addition, establish celebrations for non-traditional days such as "Report Card Day" or "First Sunday of the Month Day." *A Dictionary of Days* by Leslie Dunkling (available at many libraries) describes approximately 850 specially named days—or you can create your own.

Catch Someone Doing Something Right!

Decorate a shoe box and keep a small note pad and pencil with it. Whenever any member of the family sees another member "doing something right" (any kind of positive behavior), that person writes a description of the behavior on a slip of paper, signs it, and places it in the shoe box.

Example:

I saw Mary help Dan with his homework. Mom
I saw Kristen hang up her jacket. Jill

Choose a special time, like Sunday dinner or after a Family Sharing Circle, to read the descriptions to everyone and discuss them.

More Ideas Next Page

Write On!

Create a family journal. Ask each family member to contribute to a chronicle of daily activities, thoughts, achievements, and feelings. Encourage anyone in the family to write anecdotes about things happening in his or her own life—or in the family in general. Include routine as well as extraordinary events. They'll gain significance as the years pass and enable family members to reminisce together as the children grow and mature.

Family Outings

Visit the periodicals section of a library and find out what was happening on each family member's birth date. For a small charge, you can photocopy the front page of relevant newspapers to take home. Or, have each family member look up a historical date like December 7, 1941, the day Pearl Harbor was bombed, or November 22, 1963, when President Kennedy was assassinated, and report his or her findings at a Family Meeting. Use the reports as discussion starters.

Family "World Records" Book

Record the successes of family members in a special notebook. Use a simple spiral notebook or a 3-ring binder. (As a separate family project, design a cover for the binder.) In the notebook, write:

1. Name of the person
2. The success (big or small)
3. The date

Examples:

Sarah completed a 500 piece puzzle. 2-11-91
Mom was promoted to Vice President at the bank. 2-16-91
Paul treaded water for 1 hour. 3-9-91
Kim made the softball team. 4-4-91
Mary ate 4 brussel sprouts. 5-4-91
Dad won $50 in the office baseball pool. 6-23-91

ANYTHING POSITIVE qualifies as an entry in the Family "World Records" Book. Be creative with your entries and have fun.

More Ideas Next Page ➡

Helping Hands

As a family, volunteer to help a local agency feed hungry people in the community. Start by calling your church or synagogue, the mayor's office, or check the Yellow Pages under "Social Service Agencies." Your family could collect donated foods, assist with food preparation or deliveries, or serve food.

Seek out a nursing home or retirement complex in your area and adopt a senior citizen (or two). As schedules permit, plan weekly, monthly, or occasional visits and outings with these senior citizens. Making a positive contribution to helping others can be an enriching and rewarding family experience.

Put-Ups Not Put-Downs

Break "put-down" (a negative statement) habits developed on the playground, at school, or by watching television by requiring two "put-ups" (positive statements) for each put-down delivered at home. Make your home a positive, esteem-building place to live. Challenge family members to refrain from using put-downs by requiring them to create genuine put-ups when put-downs slip into their interactions.

A Day in the Life Of

If you have access to a video camera, invite your children to take turns taping a "family story" or "family history." Select a family member to "star" in the video, filming aspects of his or her typical day. Give every family member a turn both filming and starring in a video.

If you do not have access to a video camera, create photographic "Day in the Life Of..." chronicles and have the children write narratives to accompany the pictures. Or create documentaries (using video or still photography) featuring subjects like grooming the family pet, cultivating flowers from seeds to blossoms, decorating the Christmas tree, or preparing for other holidays. Keep these records of family history or send them to friends and relatives who live far away.

More Ideas Next Page →

Take a Chance

Talking with your children, whether in the car, on a walk, waiting in the doctor's office, or sitting around the dinner table, offers children opportunities to listen to, express, and ponder many ideas and opinions. Children who regularly have opportunities to converse with their parents grow intellectually at a faster rate than those who do not. To create opportunities for quality interaction, either buy or check out of the library a copy of *The Kids' Book of Questions* by Gregory Stock. This outstanding book contains 260 thought-provoking questions that encourage open and honest discussions and allow family members to learn more about one another. Select (or adapt) age-appropriate questions and write them on slips of paper or index cards. Place them in a box and "take a chance" by drawing a question out when you have a bit of time to talk with your children. Allow anyone present to respond to the question.

One Day at a Time

When words have been spoken, they can never be taken back. When the words are "I love you no matter what" or "You are so special to me," that's fine. But in all families, people occasionally utter phrases that are painful to hear. At a Family Meeting, clarify phrases that hurt family communication and are therefore unacceptable. Ask your children to identify phrases that they wish *you* wouldn't say: "Shut up." "No! Because I said so." "Money doesn't grow on trees." "And just who do you think you are?" "You're so stupid." Continue with expressions your kids use that you find unacceptable: "Everyone else gets to go but me." "I'm telling." "Dummy" "I hate you (that food, that chore, that sweater, etc.)" Make a list and vow to eliminate these "killer" phrases for an entire day, then another day, and another, one day at a time until they are no longer part of your family's vocabulary.

More Ideas Next Page ➡

Toast Don't Roast

Once every two to three months, host a dinner for one member of the family. Invite that person to choose the menu and excuse him or her from participating in food preparation and cleanup. Seat the honored family member at the head of the table and, using special glasses of milk, juice, water, or soda, toast him or her. Go around the table and take turns making positive statements and clicking glasses just as in a formal toast. Relate the toasts to accomplishments, skills, positive qualities, etc. Encourage the honored family member to make a brief acceptance speech and end the meal with vigorous applause.

Simple, But Good

Take walks and/or bike rides together as a family. Encourage everyone to participate in selecting the route and in noticing and sharing points of interest along the way. Plan and cook meals together. Participate in joint clean-up projects. Play board games. Give priority to the process of playing and working together. Include everyone, conveying that each member's contribution is valuable.

120

Activity Sheet

Develop a Helper's File

Children are frequently confronted with stressful situations such as getting hurt, being teased, forgetting to do something, or feeling lonely. As a parent, you can alleviate much of their stress by anticipating some of these situations and discussing them with your children before they happen. Through dialog and joint problem solving, your children learn how a variety of potentially difficult situations can be handled successfully. Work with your children to develop a "Helper's File" so that they will know who to contact for assistance if you are not available.

How To Compile a Helper's File:

1. Together, make a phone list of people your children can call if they need assistance—relatives, family friends, neighbors, teachers, police, fire department, and others.
2. Talk with your children about the kind of help each person on the list can provide.
3. Discuss what should be done in emergencies, such as:

   What do you want your child to do if he or she loses a house key?

   What do you want your child to do if he or she is approached by strangers?
4. Suggest that your children illustrate the list with original drawings or pictures cut from magazines.

Next Page

Helper's File Phone List

Names	Numbers
Relatives:	
Neighbors:	
Friends:	
Teachers:	
Police:	
Fire Department:	
Others:	

In case of ____________________ **do this** ____________________

____

____

In case of ____________________ **do this** ____________________

____

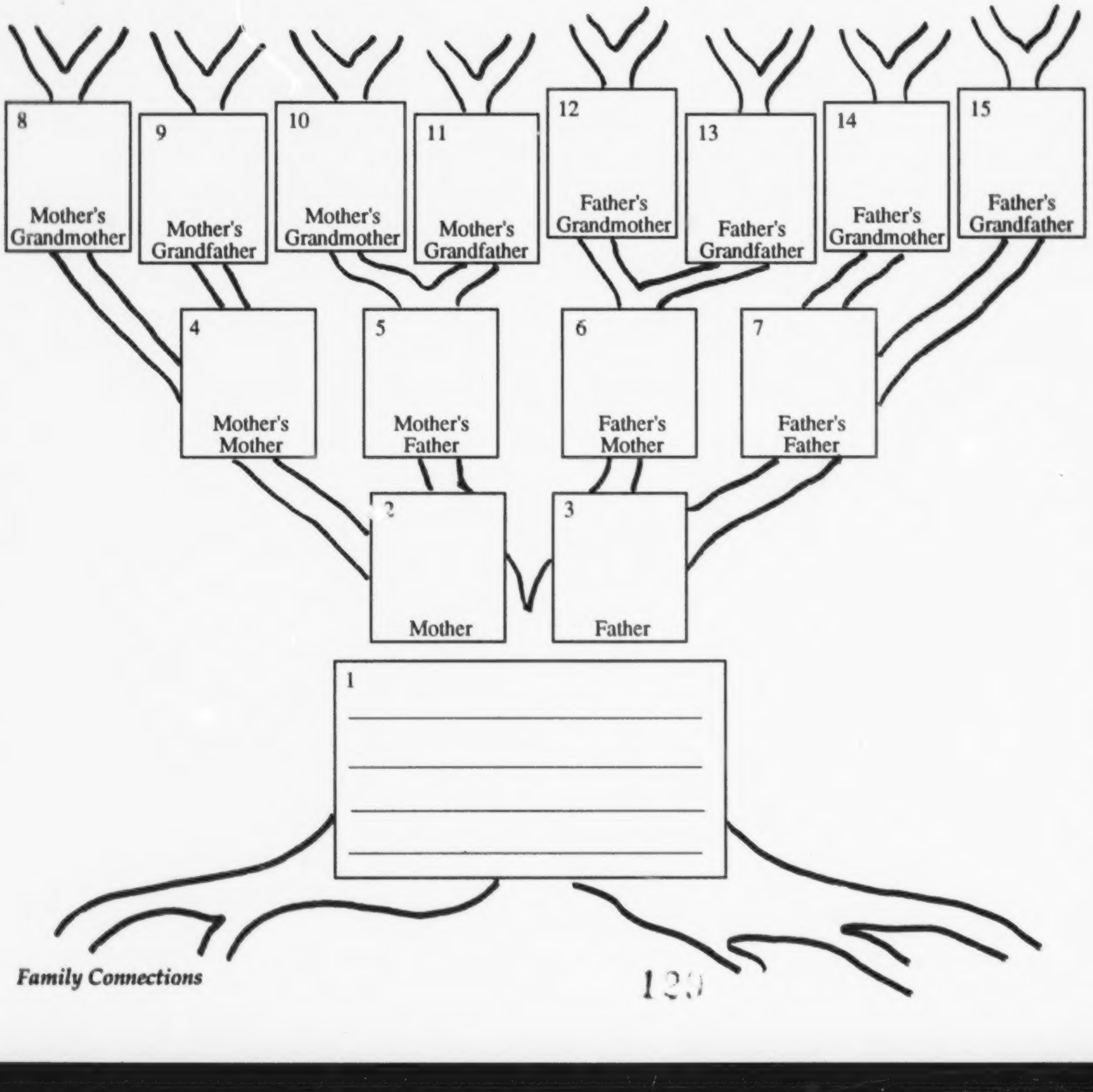
____

Activity Sheet

Our Family: Past and Present

Just as trees have roots and branches, so do families. One way for the entire family to learn more about its cultural heritage (roots) and have fun in the process is to complete a family tree.

Fill in all the names on the family tree. If there are names that you can't remember, do a little research. If possible, go back even further, using more paper and extending the family tree. Begin by writing your children's names in Block #1.


8
Mother's Grandmother
9
Mother's Grandfather
10
Mother's Grandmother
11
Mother's Grandfather
12
Father's Grandmother
13
Father's Grandfather
14
Father's Grandmother
15
Father's Grandfather
4
Mother's Mother
5
Mother's Father
6
Father's Mother
7
Father's Father
2
Mother
3
Father
1

The Value of Reading

One of the greatest gifts we can give our children is a love of reading. By reading to and with our children, we create and nurture powerful interpersonal bonds as well as offer insight and information. Reading also provides opportunities to discuss and reinforce those values that we want our children to accept and value as their own.

In 1983, the National Academy of Education and the National Institute of Education created a Commission on Reading to determine the best avenues for helping children become good readers. Their conclusion: "The single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success in reading is reading aloud to children." Reading aloud is more important than workbooks, educational games, or any other single thing we can do in preparing children to become successful readers.

Regularly reading aloud to children strengthens children's reading, writing, and speaking skills by improving their listening comprehension, a skill that must be developed before reading comprehension can occur.

Reading to children enlarges their vocabulary, lengthens their attention span, and provides more experiences to which they can relate. Consequently, children who have been read to often enter school with an advantage and have the fewest difficulties learning to read.

Read-Aloud Guidelines

Begin to read to children as early as possible and continue to do so indefinitely. Most parents stop reading to their children once the children begin school and themselves learn how to read. Instead of stopping, read more interesting and difficult stories to your children than they are able to read on their own. It is also important that they see you reading books, newspapers, and magazines.

Set aside at least one specific time each day (such as bedtime) for reading.

Always finish a book you start unless it turns out to be a bad book. If you are reading a novel, read by chapters and if it is not possible to read an entire chapter, then stop at an exciting spot to sustain interest.

Cuddle your children comfortably as you read to them. As they get older, keep them close at hand and, whenever possible, allow them to select the stories and books to be shared.

Use lots of expression as you read, and read slowly enough to allow your children to understand and imagine everything that they are hearing.

Parallel Reading

Parallel reading is a wonderful activity to participate in when everyone in the family has learned to read. Simply set up a time when family members each bring to the living room or family room a book that they enjoy reading. Have individuals read silently, stopping occasionally to share a few lines with the rest of the family. Encourage them to share funny or beautifully written passages, as well as those that inspire particular interest or insight. When you come across a line that "speaks" to you, it is not uncommon to feel a desire to read that line to someone else—someone who might react the same way you do. Sharing passages enhances a reader's satisfaction and enjoyment.

Parallel reading promotes reading for pleasure rather than just as a function of school. When children discover the joy of reading, they have taken a big step toward becoming lifetime readers.

Simple guidelines for successful Parallel Reading:

1. Establish a specific time and place for the family to read.
2. Have each family member choose an enjoyable book to read.
3. Ensure that each person has adequate lighting and a comfortable place to sit.
4. Invite everyone to occasionally share an interesting or amusing line or passage.

Turn Off the Television

Television robs children of their imaginations and is habit forming. Children benefit when we greatly restrict their viewing time. The dividends include more time for reading to your children, more time for family conversation, and more time for creative, imaginative play.

In 1980, a standard achievement exam and survey administered by the California Department of Education to half a million sixth- and twelfth-grade students correlated each child's score with the number of hours the student spent watching television. The result: The more time in front of TV, the lower the score; the less time, the higher the score. The statistics proved true regardless of the child's IQ, social background, or study practices. In addition, statistics indicate that better students (those who watch less TV) have fewer problems with alcohol and other drugs than do poorer students (those who watch more TV).

DID YOU KNOW?

By kindergarten age, a child has spent more time watching television than a college student has spent in [class during] four years of [college]. By the time high school is over, a student will have spent twice the time in front of the television set as in the classroom (from *The Media MessAge*, a publication of Train of Thought, Inc., P.O. Box 311, Redmond, WA 98073-0311).

Television hinders reading. Not only should television viewing be limited, it should be carefully monitored to ensure that children view shows appropriate to their ages and your family values. Their selections should be approved *by* you and viewed *with* you. In many American homes the television has become an electronic baby-sitter, filling children's minds with violence and Madison Avenue values. By watching with your children, you have opportunities to challenge material you oppose, at the same time voicing your own values and insights. Your involvement makes TV viewing a more active, less passive activity by allowing you and your children to engage in conversations about the shows and commercials you view.

Books related to the consequences of decisions children make, good and bad alike:

The Cat in the Hat, by Sr. Seuss, reveals the outrageous results of an afternoon with a fantastic cat, when the children decide to let him in the house during mother's absence.

More Books

Too Many Books, by Caroline Bauer, is the story of Maralou, who loved reading books, but ended up with so many that she decided to start sharing them with the people of the town.

Today Was a Terrible Day, by Patricia Giff, shows the consequences of some poor choices a second-grade boy makes, but ends up on a positive note after all when Ronald discovers he can read the note his teacher sent home.

Yummers, by James Marshall, tells what happens when Emily Pig decides to lose weight.

Small Pig, by Arnold Lobel, is the story of a small pig who decides to run away after the farmer's wife scrubs him and cleans his muddy pen.

April Fools, by Fernando Krahn, is a wordless book about two young boys who make a monster and decide to scare the people of the town with it.

Pierre, a Cautionary Tale, by Maurice Sendak, is the story of a young boy who learns to care because of the consequences of his not caring.

The Purple Coat, by Amy Hest, is the story of a young girl who decides to have a purple coat made one year instead of the same old navy blue one.

The True Story of the Three Little Pigs, by Jon Scieszka, is a delightful account of the "Three Little Pigs" tale from the wolf's point of view, depicting the outlandish consequences of each decision made by the "innocent" wolf.

Use Your Head, Dear, by Aliki, tells the story of a young alligator named Charles who means well but gets mixed up, until his father gives him an invisible thinking cap for his birthday to help him make the right decisions.

Alexander, Who Used to Be Rich Last Sunday, by Judith Viorst, is the story of a young boy who is quickly parted from his money when he cannot say no to the temptation to spend it during the week.

Mr. Rabbit and the Lovely Present, by Charlotte Zolotow, is a touching story of how Mr. Rabbit helps a young girl decide what birthday present to give her mother who likes things that are red, yellow, green, and blue.

More Books

Midnight Snowman, by Caroline Bauer, tells about one neighborhood's decision to take advantage of a late night snow, in a town where it hardly ever snows, by building a snowman before the snow turns into rain.

Books related to decision making:

Hunches in Bunches, by Dr. Seuss, is a whimsical story-poem about the difficulty of making decisions when one is pulled in all directions by bunches of good and bad hunches.

Petunia Beware, by Roger Duvoisin, is a story about a silly goose who goes outside the fence for greener grass and finds that other animals think that she will make a delicious meal.

Frederick, by Leo Lionni, is about a lazy mouse who dreams away the summer in the sun while the other mice gather food for the coming winter.

Lon PoPo, by Ed Young, is a Caldecott Medal winner that tells a Chinese version of the old "Red Riding Hood" story. In this story, three sisters staying home alone make a decision to allow a hungry wolf, disguised as their grandmother, to enter the house.

The Foundling, by Carol Carrick, is the story of a little boy who resists his parents' efforts to adopt a puppy after his dog is killed in an accident, but changes his mind when he rescues a lost puppy.

Sarah, Plain and Tall, by Patricia MacLachlan, is a story of Sarah Wheaton who comes to the prairie and meets young Caleb and his sister, and must decide whether to marry the children's father and become their mother.

Stone Fox, by John Gardiner, is the story of Willy, a courageous young boy who makes a decision to enter a dog-sled race to save Grandfather's Idaho potato farm.

Freckle Juice, by Judy Blume, tells about Andrew, whose greatest wish is to have freckles like his friend Nicky so he decides to make a recipe concocted by a devious classmate and drink it.

More Books

Books that help children make safe and healthy decisions, including refusing to participate in harmful activities:

All Alone After School, by Muriel Stanek, is about young Josh who, with his list of rules and important phone numbers and a lucky white stone, meets the challenge of staying alone until his mother gets home from work each day.

A Bear's Bicycle, by Emilie McLeod, tells about a little boy and his bear who have an exciting bicycle ride—the boy practicing the rules of safety and the teddy bear demonstrating the horrors of careless bicycle riding.

Three Robbers, by Tomi Ungerer, tells the story of robbers who plan to get rich by kidnapping children and holding them for ransom, but who find the tables have been turned on them.

When the Boys Ran the House, by Joan Carris, tells what happens when a 13-year-old boy has to take care of his 3 younger brothers while Mother is recuperating from an illness and Dad is away on a business trip. From bees in the kitchen to a swallowed goldfish, the children do survive in this amusing story.

Fudge, by Charlotte Graeber, is about a 13-year-old boy who promises to take care of a new puppy all by himself in spite of his parents' reluctance due to expected twins.

Keeping Barney, by Jessie Haas, is the story of Sarah, who wants badly to have a horse of her own, but whose parents aren't convinced of her ability to be responsible. However, she proves herself trustworthy when she answers an ad for someone to take care of a horse for the winter.

More Books

Reference books related to the use of drugs and medicine:

Know About Drugs, by Margaret Hyde, includes facts about the use and abuse of drugs; marijuana, cocaine, cigarettes, and others.

Alcohol—What It Is, What It Does, by Judity Seixas, is an easy reference with bright cartoon illustrations that gives facts about alcohol: what it is, where it can be found, and its effects on the mind and body.

Books about smoking that are factual and easy-to-read:

Tobacco—What It Is, What It Does, by Judith Seixas, is a simple text presenting a strong case against smoking and including the history of tobacco, the reasons people smoke, and detailed effects of smoking on parts of the respiratory system.

Smoking and Health, by Brian Ward, provides short, informative sections of text with colorful drawings and photos that cover the effects of tobacco on various organs, the spread of the smoking habit, the cultivation and processing of tobacco, the cost to the community, and others.

Books related to peer pressure:

Otherwise Known as Sheila the Great, by Judy Blume, amusingly reveals what a young girl who feels inferior to her peers will do to pretend she is "Sheila the Great."

Sam, Bangs and Moonshine, by Evaline Ness, is a Caldecott Medal winner about a young girl who tells a few too many tales to impress one of her peers, and almost gets him killed.

Dear Mr. Henshaw, by Beverly Cleary, is about a young boy who is new to his school and is therefore reluctant to make a fuss about someone stealing the goodies out of his lunch.

More Books

Books relating to children involved in family or peer conflict:

The Bully of Barkham Street, by Mary Stolz, is the story of Martin Hastings, a kid with a bad attitude who learns a few lessons about getting along in the world.

The Hundred Dresses, by Eleanor Estes, tells about a poor Polish girl who is teased by her classmates and dreams about having a hundred dresses at home, rather than the one she wears every day to school.

Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day, by Judith Viorst, reveals the misfortunes of a young boy who is in conflict with everyone he encounters one day and decides that it would be better if he moved to Australia.

Books related to problem solving:

Did You Carry the Flag Today, Charley?, by Rebecca Caudill, is about a young Applachian boy who attends summer school and finds many new things to excite his curiosity, but cannot seem to earn the honor of carrying the flag to the bus until the librarian helps solve the problem of his behavior.

Powder Puff Puzzle, by Patricia Giff, tells about how detective Dawn Bosco and her cohorts search for her escaped cat, Powder Puff, one hot summer day.

The Little House, by Virginia Burton, is a touching story of a little country house that, as time passes, finds itself surrounded by the city with all its houses and traffic. The problem is solved by sensitive, caring people who have the house moved to the country once again.

Homework Caper, by Joan Lexau, follows Bill and Ken who try to solve the mystery of Bill's missing homework, and discover Ken's younger sister's need for attention.

More Books

It Could Always Be Worse, by Margot Zemach, is a Yiddish folk tale about a poor unfortunate man who lives with his mother, wife, and children in a little one-room hut, and goes to the rabbi asking for advice on how to relieve the crowding. The advice he receives is not exactly what he expects, but the solution comes in the end.

Ira Sleeps Over, by Bernard Waber, is the story of young Ira, who is excited at the prospect of spending the night at Reggie's house until his sister brings up the problem that taking his teddy bear will create.

It's Your Turn, Roger, by Susan Gretz, tells about Roger Pig, who feels he is being overworked with chores, so he visits several neighbors where he is treated like a real guest, but learns to appreciate his home situation when the food and housekeeping of the neighbors are not to his liking.

Books related to positive attitudes and self-talk:

Train to Lulu's, by Elizabeth Howard, tells about two young sisters who follow their mother's instructions when they travel alone on a 9-hour train trip from Boston to Baltimore, resulting in a successful and mostly enjoyable trip.

Miss Rumphius, by Barbara Cooney, is a gentle tale of Great Aunt Alice whose life is dictated by purpose and positive attitude, especially when she figures out how to honor her grandfather's request to make the world more beautiful.

The Chalk Box Kid, by Clyde Bulla, describes the ingenuity of a young boy who moves to a new house which has no room for a garden and creates one on a blank wall. From his chalk drawings grows the respect of others and the beginning of a new friendship.

More Books

Books related to positive self-esteem and uniqueness:

Free to Be.. You and Me, by Marlo Thomas, is a collection of songs, poems, stories and pictures by well known composers, writers, and artists which emphasize the idea that all people are free to be who they are and who they want to be.

I Like Me!, by Nancy Carlson, tells the story of an upbeat pig who dances, skates, bakes a cake, takes good care of herself, and encourages readers to do the same and say, "I'll always be me, and I like that!"

Sabrina, by Martha Alexander, tells about a little girl who thinks others are making fun of her name on the first day of school until she sees them fighting over who will have her "princess" name.

I Wish I Were a Butterfly, by James Howe, is a sensitive story about a little cricket who questions his identity when frog tells him he is ugly. A friendly spider convinces him to see himself as unique.

Shy Charles, by Rosemary Wells, is the story of a painfully shy mouse who won't open up until faced with an emergency when he rescues his baby-sitter.

Angelina Ballerina, by Katherine Holabird, is about Angelina, a pretty little mouse who dances all the time and forgets about her responsibilities until her parents decide to give her ballet slippers and a dress for ballet lessons.

Earl's Too Cool for Me, by Leah Komaiko, gives a little boy's impressions of the coolest kid in town. Would he ever want to play with just a "regular" guy?

The Ugly Duckling, by Hans Christian Andersen, is the classic fairy tale of an awkward little duckling who grew into a beautiful swan.

More Books →

Books related to the concept of making oneself happy:

A Lion for Lewis, by Rosemary Wells, tells about little Lewis who never gets to be anything good when he plays with George and Sophie...until he finds the best costume in the corner of the attic.

Up and Down of the Merry-Go-Round, by Bill Martin Jr. and John Archambault, is an illustrated poem about the thrill of riding an old-fashioned merry-go-round.

And To Think That I Saw It On Mulberry Street, by Dr. Seuss, is a delightful classic about a young boy who uses his imagination to create excitement on a rather quiet street.

Where the Wild Things Are, by Maurice Sendak, tells about a wild rumpus created by Max and the monsters he tames in his imagination after he is sent to his room for misbehaving.

Books related to feelings:

Good-bye House, by Frank Asch, tells about Baby Bear who returns to his empty house to say goodbye before the family and moving van leave.

There's a Nightmare in My Closet, by Mercer Mayor, describes the determination of a young child to take action against the nightmare who lives in his closet, and who soon learns that the nightmare is timid and cowardly.

Koala Lou, by Mem Fox, is a story of a young Koala who tries to win a tree-climbing contest in order to hear her mother say, "Loala Lou, I DO love you!"

Ira Sleeps Over, by Bernard Waber, deals with a young boy's fear.

The Dead Bird, by Margaret Wise Brown, relates to sadness.

I Was So Mad!, by Norma Simon, is about anger.

Hey, Look at Me!, by Sandy Grant, relates to pride.

More Books

Hey, Al, by Arthur Yorainks, is a Caldecott Medal winner about a man and his dog, miserable with their existence on the West Side, until a mysterious bird offers them a change of fortune which teaches them that the grass can be a little too green on the other side.

Barn Dance!, by Gil Martin Jr., portrays a young boy who, unable to sleep on the night of a full moon, follows the sound of music across the fields and finds an unusual barn dance in progress, so he joins in on the fun and frolic.

Oh, Were They Ever Happy!, by Peter Spier, is about the Noonan children who have a ball painting the house in multiple colors one Saturday morning while their parents are away.

I'll Fix Anthony, by Judith Viorst, is a tale of intended revenge—all the things the narrator wants to do to his older brother when he is six, just like Anthony.

The Hating Book, by Charlotte Zolotow, is a story about friends who undergo some misunderstandings in their relationship.

The Quarreling Book, by Charlotte Zolotow, is a story about a family that suffers through a disagreeable rainy day but all ends well when father returns home happy.

Books related to safety:

Safety Can Be Fun, by Munro Lead, shows carton stick figures demonstrating the perils of the Nitwits: Never-Look, Hanger-On, the Tool-Foolish, and others in everyday situations in which children often behave dangerously.

Berenstein Bears Learn About Strangers, by Stan Berenstein, tells about how this famous family of bears works out 6 important rules about strangers so that the cubs can feel free to play and be friendly, yet sensible.

More Books

Books related to illness, getting well, and staying healthy:

Come to the Doctor, Henry, by Mary Chalmers, concludes that the doctor isn't so bad after all.

Trip to the Doctor, by Margot Linn, is a guessing game of items to be used in a child's physical exam.

When I See My Doctor, by Susan Kuklin, is about a 4-year-old's trip to the doctor, narrated by the child.

Books related to foods and their identification:

Growing Colors, by Bruce McMillan, gives full-page photographs of vegetables and fruits.

Anno's Faces, by Mitsumasa Anno, has luscious pictures of over 45 different fruits and vegetables, and names them all.

Books related to being responsible and irresponsible:

Charlotte's Web, by E.B. White, portrays a very responsible and caring spider named Charlotte who helps save the life of a simple young pig named Wilber.

Farewell to Shady Glen, by Bill Peet, is a timely book that shows what is happening, and what could happen, to our towns when people are careless about polluting the air and land.

Annie and the Old One, by Miska Miles, tells of the decisions a young Native American girl makes to try to prevent her grandmother from dying, and the subsequent lessons she learns abvout the responsibilities of those who are alive to keep the household going.

General Reading List for Parents

Bloomfield, Harold. ***Making Peace with Your Parents***, New York: Random House, 1983.

Briggs, Dorothy Corkille. ***Your Child's Self-Esteem***, Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1970.

Feiden, Karyn. ***Parent's Guide to Raising Responsible Kids***, New York: Prentice Hall Press, 1991.

Ginott, Haim. ***Between Parent and Child***, New York: MacMillan, 1970.

Gordon, Thomas. ***Parent Effectiveness Training***, New York: Peter H. Hyden, 1972.

Hawkins, David J. ***Preparing for the Drug-Free Years: A Family Activity Book***, Seattle, WA: Developmental Research and Programs, 1988.

Helmstetter, Shad. ***Predictive Parenting, What to Say When You Talk to Your Kids***, New York: Pocket Books, 1989.

Samples, Bob. ***Open Mind/Whole Mind, Parenting and Teaching Tomorrow's Children Today***, Rolling Hills Estates, CA: Jalmar Press, 1987.

Scott, Sharon. ***PPR: Peer Pressure Reversal***, Amherst, MA: Human Resource Development Press, 1985.

Trelease, Jim. ***The New Read-Aloud Handbook***, New York: Penguin Books, 1989.

Wilmes, David J. ***Parenting for Prevention: How to Raise a Child to Say No to Alcohol/Drugs***, St. Paul, MN: Johnson Institute Books, 1988.

Youngs, Bettie, Ph.D. ***Helping Your Teenager Deal With Stress***, Los Angeles: J. P. Tarcher, Inc.,1986.

Growing Up Drug Free, A Parent Guide to Prevention, 1990. National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information, P.O. Box 2345, Rockville, MD 20852.

Ten Steps to Help Your Child Say "No": A Parent's Guide, 1986. National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information, P.O. Box 2345, Rockville, MD 20852.

FAMILY CONNECTIONS

Teaching Your Children the Skills of Self-Esteem and Drug Prevention

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Bring your family closer together with fun activities! Strengthen communication through Family Sharing Circles! Get things done in Family Meetings! Involve the entire family in the drug prevention effort!

Written for parents, this useful workbook provides easy-to-read information about tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs, along with step-by-step instructions for activities that promote family interaction. Chapters include:

Strengthening Family Bonds. Find out how to:
- Lead Family Sharing Circles.
- Conduct Family Meetings.
- Use constructive praise to build self-esteem.
- Empower family members through "strength bombardments."

Creating Family Policies and Developing Workable Rules. Learn how to:
- Turn your hopes and dreams for your children into reasonable expectations.
- Translate those expectations into workable policies that guide behavior.
- Develop rules consistent with your family policies.
- Establish logical negative *and* positive consequences to reinforce rules.

Teaching Valuable Life Skills. Help your children learn to:
- Make decisions.
- Solve problems.
- Set goals.
- Assertively "say no."

Preventing Drug Use/Abuse
- Specific information about tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs.
- Suggestions for helping your children resist the peer and media pressure to use drugs.
- Activities that help you teach your children how to make safe and healthy choices.

Family Fun Involving Everyone
- Terrific ideas for family activities you'll love, like designing your own holidays, compiling a family "world's record" book, the "put-ups vs. put-downs" challenge, and creating opportunities for quality interaction.
- Activity sheets for creating a family tree, a "Helper's File," and more.
- Over 85 book titles/authors to read aloud to young children—discuss with older children—listed by topic area.

Resource Lists
- Drug prevention organizations offering help to families.
- Books and other recommended publications dealing with parenting.

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